

OCTOBER, 1960

40 Cents

# Desert

.... magazine of the  
**OUTDOOR**  
**SOUTHWEST**

# DESERT RAT HARRY OLIVER'S ALMANAC

1888 - 1999

## OCTOBER

To the Dutch, October is **Wynmaand** or "Wine-month." Makes sense.

The Chipewa Indians called October **Atchitamon** — "Squirrel Month." Also "Head-First" month, referring to the squirrel's habit of descending trees head-first—not backwards like a lineman coming down a telephone pole.



## HALLOWE'EN

Hallowe'en is for the animals, first, and the kids second — not for grown folks at all.

I wish I could invite all of you to Old Fort Oliver on October 31st for our annual Spook Party, but I can't because people take up too much room.

Last year I showed the visiting animals my extraordinary new lightning bug. I reasoned that by crossing moths (which always fly toward a light) with lightning bugs (which give light) the outcome would be moths with lights on their tails. In theory, these Pinwheel Bugs, as I call them, would fly around in circles, chasing their tails.

It worked, too. I turned my boxful of Pinwheel Bugs loose at the witching hour, and the sky around Ft. Oliver was filled with "fireworks."

### OCTOBER AIR ... and wishful thinking

The old Indian stood at the top of a mesa with his son, looking over the beautiful desert valley. Said the old chief: "Some day, my son, all this land will belong to the Indians again. Paleface all go to the moon."

Despite Harvest Moon, Apple Cider, Black Cat, Orange-Yellow Pumpkins, Jack-O-Lanterns, Glossy Black Ravens and Owls, I believe the spry bushy-tailed squirrel is the most Octoberish of all symbols. (Up in the nut country, these squirrels fill the hollow trees with so many nuts the owls don't have any place to sleep day-times.)

To promote my "Make Squirrels the Symbol of October" campaign, I put one of the critters in a box and mailed it across the valley to Desert Magazine at Palm Desert, Calif.—a new town which takes pride in calling itself "The Smartest Address on the American Desert." The postman delivering the package reports that the squirrel jumped out and ran away. "Why don't you chase it?" asked an excited real estate man. "Why should I?" replied the postman. "He doesn't know where he's going. I've got the address right here on the box."



## AH, OCTOBER . . .

October in the Great Southwestern Desert—refreshing as an ocean voyage. In fact, the high-wide Mojave Desert's isolated mountain ranges and buttes resemble great ships putting into harbor. Cool winds and a horizon as wide as the sea—no wonder my Trot Opinion Poll (slower than Gallup, but more sure-footed) reports that more ex-sailors decide to retire to the desert in October than at any other time of the year. (Another interesting Trot fact: ex-submarine commanders prefer the Salton Sea area for retirement, probably because it is below sea level.)

Up in the high-high Desert October is followed by Wisconsin weather—but down here in the Low Desert we have five months of glorious October.

Enjoy yourselves, friends! Remember—in 20 years you'll be sighing for the "good old days." (Gee whiz—I first used this line more than 20 years ago.)

# Publisher's Notes

For the *Desert Magazine* staff the October issue always marks the end of the summer season and the start of the Christmas season. In the desert country there are two basic climatic periods: Summer and The-Rest-Of-The-Year. We are now going into the latter.

At this point on the calendar we remind our readers that December 25th is not far away, and NOW is the time to start ordering gift subscriptions as Christmas presents for friends who share your enjoyment of the great Southwest.

A Postage-paid order envelope is enclosed with this issue of *Desert* for the use of those who would order gift subscriptions.

\* \* \*

A listing of Southwestern and desert books is also carried in this issue of the magazine (see page 36). This catalog will be of assistance to those who like to give books as Christmas gifts. Again, please order early, for many of the book publishers are slow in delivering "rush" orders during the autumn months.

\* \* \*

Our friends are once again invited to visit the *Desert Magazine Art Gallery* (largest all-desert gallery in the nation), and the *Desert Craft Shop and Bookstore*, all located in the *Desert Magazine Building* in Palm Desert, midway between Palm Springs and Indio. Starting October 15 the *Gallery and Craft Shop* will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. There is no entrance fee.

Many of our readers would like to see our extensive printing plant while they are visiting the *Desert* pueblo. Ask the *Gallery Director* for a guide to take you through the printing plant.

Cordially,  
CHUCK SHELTON  
Publisher

## PHOTO and ART credits

(Unless otherwise specified below or in text, photographs and art work are by authors of features in which they appear.)

**Page 6:** art work by Harry Oliver. **12:** Madison Devlin. **13:** Map by Norton Allen. **16:** Madison Devlin. **19:** A. A. Forbes. **20-21:** Frasher's of Pomona. **33:** Harold O. Weight. **34:** Map by Norton Allen. **40:** Map by Norton Allen. **43 and Back Cover:** LeRoi Russel.

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23

Number  
10

# Desert

--magazine of the Outdoor Southwest--

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*publisher*

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*editor*

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*circulation manager*

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# LETTERS

. . . FROM OUR READERS . . .

## Last Choice: Indians . . .

*To the Editor:* Several months ago you conducted a poll to ascertain your readers' tastes in the various types of desertana which you serve up. If my memory is still good, results favored travel, field trips, ghost towns, exploration—and running a poor fifth or sixth was Indians and related Indiana.

*Desert Magazine* had been running far too much drivel re Poor Lo, and after an

incredible issue came out in which 34 of the 44 pages of *Desert* were devoted entirely to Indians, I let my subscription run out. Don't remember the exact date of this issue, but it was one in which a lot of space was wasted on a museum of Indian artifacts and so on in Flagstaff.

I got in the habit of going to my newsstand and scanning the magazine, and if the particular issue was top-heavy with Indian rot I would buy another publication.

However, lately there has been a marked

change for the better. More of the material your subscribers asked for, and less—much less—of the Indians. Fine! I am re-subscribing.

The four covers by Clyde Forsythe are the finest bit of Americana West that I have seen in years. If I owned the originals I would not trade them for all of the insane smears with which Picasso has ruined good canvas.

Incidentally, should you wonder: I know my Indians. I have spent most of my life in Indian country. I shared my blankets with some of the Apache Scouts who were tracking Pancho Villa in 1916. I mined in northern Chihuahua.

If you would like to see Indians as they really are, go up to Parker, Arizona, any weekend and hang around the beer joints. Parker is a real Indian town.

WILL T. SCOTT  
Santee, Calif.

## Salute from an Indian . . .

*To the Editor:* It has been very seldom that I have had the time (or the desire) to write congratulating a publication for the wonderful job it is doing to help acquaint the American public with the American Indian. Unfortunately, too many publications still seem to subscribe to the belief that the Indian is an underfed and uneducated ward of the public—absolutely without pride or ambition.

On the other hand, *Desert Magazine* has done much to help inform the public as to the true stature of my people. I salute you for your policy, and urge you to continue the fine work.

DAVID CHETHLAHE  
(TURTLE) PALADIN  
Prescott, Arizona

## Household Fixture . . .

*To the Editor:* The quality of your magazine has improved so steadily it is now a necessity in our home.

JOAN L. MAHER  
Gabbs, Nevada

## Trouble at the Border . . .

*To the Editor:* During a recent trip to Baja California, I ran into a rather odd situation. I had been rock hunting around the various washes on the east-slope of the mountains west of Mexicali, and when it was time to call it a day I had a few interesting rocks which I put in a small box.

I checked out at the border, and the

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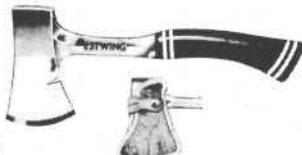
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Mexican officials waved me through. But I was flagged over by the U.S. Customs, and they proceeded to search my truck and ask all kinds of questions. They took my rocks and looked them over carefully, then stating that it was against the law to bring gem stones or minerals out of Mexico to the United States they confiscated the specimens.

This is the first time I ever ran into this law or even heard of it. Is it an established rule or is it something new that has come up? I would like a bit of information on this.

JOHN MAXON  
Upland, California

(There are no Customs laws prohibiting the exportation from Mexico or importation into the United States of mineral specimens. However, gem material must be free from soil of any kind in order to pass a Department of Agriculture requirement—and all merchandise or material must be declared to a Customs officer upon entry into the United States. Failure to declare can result in seizure and forfeiture of the articles to Customs. —Ed.)

### A Black-Light Discovery . . .

To the Editor: My copies of Clyde Forsythe's "Gold Strike" reprints arrived today, and I feel I must let you know how pleased I am to have them. The paintings are not only brilliantly conceived, but the lithograph job is perfect.

May I suggest that perhaps you have overlooked an important selling point. With the use of my black-light (ultra violet Mineralight) I discovered that the reprints reveal an entirely different aspect, especially the Ghost Town. Of course, they do not fluoresce, but under black-light a certain phosphorescence appears, and the deserted scene projects an aura of brilliant desert moonlight, clear clean air, and restful history.

FRANK W. SMITHERAM  
Santa Barbara, Calif.

### Wanted: More Reprints . . .

To the Editor: I have ordered the Clyde Forsythe "Gold Strike" painting reprints, and I'm wondering if other suitable-for-framing reprints are available from *Desert Magazine*.

ROY HOELKE  
Claremont, Calif.

(The Forsythe reprints have proven so popular that we are considering making other desert scenes—both paintings and

full-color photographs—available. These would be lithographed with the same high standards as the "Gold Strike" prints, on comparable high-quality stock. Cost per print would be modest. To help us in our planning, we would appreciate hearing the opinion of our readers on this matter. What desert scenes appeal most to you? What artists or photographers are your favorites? Address your cards to: Reprints, *Desert Magazine*, Palm Desert, Calif.—Ed.)

### That Indefinable "Something" . . .

To the Editor: We truly enjoy good photography, but artists like Clyde Forsythe and John Hilton add that indefinable "something" that makes the desert so fascinating. Let's have more of them.

MRS. PAT LoCASCIO  
Lubbock, Texas

### Episode at Lee's Ferry . . .

To the Editor: Laura Armer's picture of Lee's Ferry in 1925 (*August Desert*) also brought back memories to me. I went to Lee's in the summer of '25 to survey for bridge sites. I fell off the side of the ferry and was carried up-stream by the undercurrent. The old-timers told me I was very lucky to have escaped the river with my life.

We crossed the Colorado each day, surveying for four or five bridge sites. The Navajo Bridge later was built on one of our sites.

G. G. BURN  
Prescott, Ariz.

### Fascinating Owyhee . . .

To the Editor: My brother and I were born in Owyhee County, Idaho, of which Prof. Larrison writes in the August *Desert Magazine*. Having in my lifetime of 65 years covered Owyhee quite thoroughly on horseback—which to my way of thinking is the only way to really "see" a country—I can testify to its immense proportion and fascinating character.

Covering Owyhee County on horseback was done mainly in line of work—buckaroos, cattle, gathering and branding wild horses, going on what passed for vacation trips, visiting distant neighbors, exploring canyons and remote areas and otherwise becoming acquainted with our own corner of the earth.

Four-wheel-drive vehicles, airplanes and autos now whisk people to these remote scenes in minutes, where our movements in the past were measured in days and even weeks.

DAISY E. CHRISTENSEN  
Reno

### Owyhee Road Is Paved . . .

To the Editor: The Owyhee Desert map on page 11 of the August issue shows dirt road from Murphy via Grand View to Bruneau. This road is now paved.

ARTHUR C. DAVIS  
Reseda, Calif.

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# SOUTHWEST NEWS BRIEFS

**Oilmen Eye North Kaibab** Conservationists and sportsmen, usually at odds when it comes to public land policy issues, have joined forces in Arizona to strongly oppose proposed granting of oil leases on the North Kaibab National Forest. Several oil companies are seeking a federal government go-ahead to test the great northern Arizona game preserve's petroleum potential. An oil industry spokesman said modern methods of pumping oil will not interfere with wildlife—in fact, the development of water by drilling crews often benefits game animals, he stated. But statewide conservation and sportsmen groups, led by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, want no industrial disturbance to the North Kaibab, which some experts feel is one of the West's last truly unspoiled areas.

**Honor "Boy's Eye View"** Harrison Doyle's "Boy's Eye View of the Wild West," which appeared as a three-part feature article in Desert Magazine, was designated Bronze Medal Winner in recent California State Fair Competition. Doyle, a resident of Vista, described his boyhood at Randsburg and Needles in the "Boy's Eye View" series. These features appeared in Desert's August and November, 1959, and January, 1960, issues.

**Nevada Has Boating Woes** Nevada Governor Grant Sawyer has asked the State Motor Vehicle Department to come up with a solution to the growing number of boating accidents in the state, particularly at Lake Mead. But, there's a fly in the ointment: money. While the Legislature designated the Motor Vehicle Department to administer the boating act passed this year, it very inconveniently left no provision for financing enforcement. Registration fees collected from Nevada's boat owners are not ample to cover cost of 24-hour patrols on the state's four most-used lakes: Mead, Tahoe, Pyramid and Wildhorse Reservoir. One possible solution under consideration by Sawyer is the deputizing of unpaid volunteers to keep watch over the increasing number of boating enthusiasts.

**Ironwoods Saved** The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has rescinded permits issued to individuals which allowed them to remove dead ironwood trees from the desert area. The wood was used mainly for the manufacture of charcoal. Both Imperial and Riverside counties in California have been asked to prepare ordinances which would permanently protect ironwoods.

**Peyote Users Win Test** The long battle for the right to use peyote in religious ceremonies has been won by Arizona Indians. As defined by a recent court ruling, peyote is not habit-forming or harmful, neither is it a narcotic. Texas and Montana already have made such rulings, and peyote became legalized in New Mexico last year. South Dakota may be next on the list of states to allow peyote, Native American Church leaders believe. Peyote is a cactus derivative that produces hallucinations in "technicolor."

**Facilities for Desert Sailors** Facilities for the comfort of visitors will be built at central Arizona's Saguaro Lake and Phon D. Sutton Recreation Area, where the Salt and Verde rivers meet. The U. S. Forest Service received \$18,000 from Maricopa County to build more picnic tables, toilets and fireplaces at these increasingly popular water sports sites.

**Four Tons of Litter** Members of the Sierra Club, assisted by persons from other civic groups, have cleared the litter along the route from Bishop

Pass to the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada. Four tons of glass, cans and garbage were picked up and carted to the Bishop, Calif., city dump. This was the third annual clean-up expedition sponsored by the Sierra Club. One side-light: the clean-up detail counted more than 300 trees killed by campers cutting wood for fires.

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# POWER SCOOT

**BY SAM HICKS**

Forty-year-old Sam Hicks was born and raised in Wyoming. "I am basically a cattle rancher," he says, "but in connection with our ranching, my father and I operated one of the largest big game hunting businesses in the state of Wyoming for 25 years."

Hicks still owns his share of the home ranch in the deep snow area of southern Jackson Hole. Of necessity, he became a proficient skier at an early age. Hicks and one of his brothers used to carry mail with dog-teams over a 17-mile route—the last people to carry a regularly scheduled mail route with dogs in the original 48 states.

Hicks met Erle Stanley Gardner in 1946. They became close friends and four years later Hicks moved to the Gardner ranch at Temecula where he is employed as ranch manager. He has traveled extensively with Gardner, and has worked with him in the investigation of a good many of the Court of Last Resort cases.

Hicks's first Desert Magazine story, "Last of the Basket Weavers," appeared in the August issue.

**S**HORTY HARRIS, who made the Bullfrog strike near Rhyolite, called himself "the last of the single blanket, jackass prospectors." As far back as the turn of the century, when Shorty followed his donkey into the eastern edge of Death Valley and discovered the famous decaying green ledge that was laced with gold, he considered himself one of the few remaining survivors of an almost forgotten era.

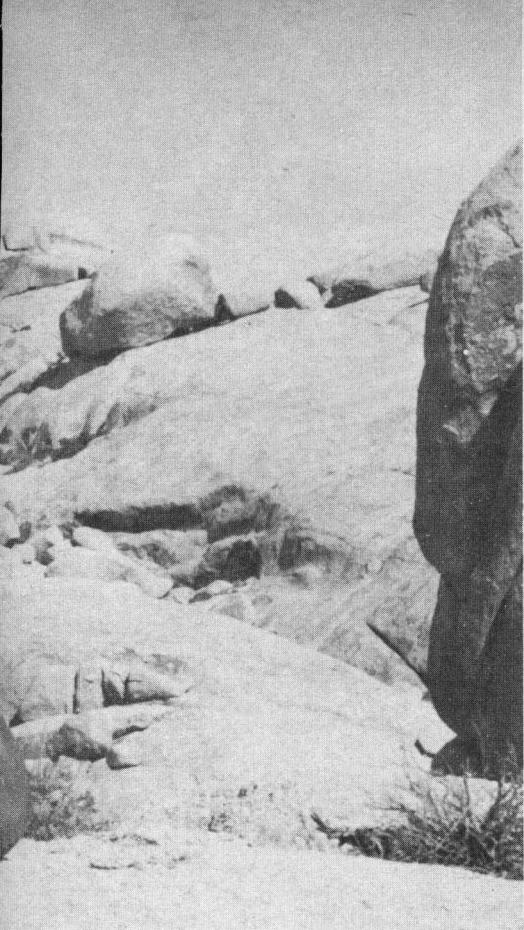
The fraternity of desert prospectors to which Shorty belonged, commanded a lot of respect. These rugged individuals had the know-how and stamina to travel successfully into—and out of—the most inaccessible stretches of forbidden lands. By their own choice they lived for weeks at a time in the beauty and fury and silence of the desert, while engaged in solitary search for riches and adventure. Their patient travels behind plodding donkeys often took them into terrain of striking color and geological interest so remote that these areas have never again been visited by man.

The wartime invention of rugged

four-wheel drive vehicles opened up to hordes of uranium miners and rock-hounds vast expanses of desert which had formerly been considered the exclusive domain of the donkey prospectors. But, efficient as these vehicles are in negotiating steep hills and loose sand, their width and vulnerable differentials and transfer cases still prevent them from following interesting narrow paths into the seclusion of the rock desert mountains which lie in the distance beyond the shimmering mirage flats and rolling foothills.

Just as the donkey was replaced by the four-wheel drive buggies as the key means of desert travel, so today the recent invention of the low-gear power scooter may once again change the whole character of desert exploration. This mechanized desert donkey, if handled skillfully, is capable of carrying one man and his camp outfit into the same rugged desert mountains where Shorty Harris and the other

• • • A NEW



# 'ERS . . .

jackass prospectors were the only white men to ever leave their tracks.

I have become acquainted with two of the present makes of power scooters, the Tote-Gote and the Pak-Jak. By the time this article appears in print, there probably will be at least a dozen different makes of power scooters available to outdoorsmen. All of them, regardless of trade-names, will be similarly constructed. Like the Tote-Gote and Pak-Jak, they probably will have a lightweight aircooled engine of approximately three horsepower, a centrifugal clutch and belt drive to the first jackshaft, and two more successive chain drive reductions to the rear wheel. The efficiency of these machines is based on their careful construction, a gear ratio of about 40-to-1, and the machines' ability to absorb punishment in really rough terrain.

I HAVE BEEN associated with Erle Stanley Gardner for the past 10 years, and have never known a man even

remotely comparable to him when it comes to having so many varied interests in life. Although he is widely known as the king of mystery story writers and equally respected for his dedicated work in the attempt to help improve our administration of justice through the efforts of his Court of Last Resort, it is not generally realized that whenever he can take time away from his work, he is a rugged outdoorsman and a great lover of the desert.

When Gardner continued to hear claims that the advent of these power scooters was destined to revolutionize desert back-country travel, he asked me to familiarize myself with some of the popular makes of the machines so we could later take them out in the desert and judge for ourselves exactly what could be expected of these machines in an impartial test.

Early this summer the opportunity for such an adventure arose. Our task force headed for the Chuckawalla Mountains of Southeastern California where, we reasoned, we could combine some desert scooter testing with some lost mine hunting. There was an outside chance that we could make some significant discoveries by combining the various remaining clues to the area's lost mines, and then going out in search of these bonanzas with an entirely new type of transportation.

In the party, in addition to Gardner and me, were: Murl Emery, a grizzled desert miner from Nelson, Nevada, who had become interested in power scooters and was one of the first to buy a Tote-Gote; J. W. Black, Jr., inventor of the Pak-Jak; and Frank Caro, a good-natured capable hand who was our camp tender.

We purposely turned our caravan of four-wheel drive vehicles onto the worst roads we could find in the Chuckawalla-Chocolate mountains region, and soon we were in the most inaccessible part of the desert. Here we made our base camp and prepared for the field tests.

Our two scooters have a few characteristic differences. The Tote-Gote has an extremely efficient power transmission in the combination of its centrifugal clutch and the spring-loaded variable-speed pulley which works in conjunction with the clutch. Its drive wheel is the same diameter as that of the front wheel, but it has a traction grip tire mounted on it. The Tote-Gote manufacturers have attempted to keep this machine's weight at a minimum, and in so doing may have sac-

rificed some of its strength and durability. However, its light-weight has certain definite advantages, and it is, all things considered, a pretty nice little machine.

J. W. Black, Jr., inventor of the Pak-Jak, started the construction of his machine on a slightly different principle. He was willing to have more weight, provided he could get more traction; so he designed a scooter with the rear drive consisting of a 15-inch car wheel which also has mounted on it a regular cleated tractor tire. The front wheel, in contrast, is of conventional scooter size. Black concentrated on building the most durable scooter he could design because, as he points out, mechanical difficulties encountered great distances from roads might well have fatal results. Both the Tote-Gote and Pak-Jak have a top speed of around eight miles per hour, and in steady use burn approximately one quart of gasoline per hour.

People familiar with power scooters frequently hear salesmen insist that their machines will go any place a saddle horse can be ridden. This statement is not true.

Before I joined Erle Stanley Gardner's organization, I was a cattle rancher in the Jackson Hole Country of Wyoming. In addition to our cattle ranching operation, for 25 years my father and I were engaged in the business of outfitting and guiding hunting parties for elk, moose, deer, mountain sheep and bear. We hunted the mountains exclusively with horses, excepting that time we spent stalking our game after we had it located. We packed our camps into the mountains with horses and mules and we packed our hunters' duffel, their game meat and trophies out of the mountains with horses and mules. As a result of this experience I think I have gained a reasonably sound judgment as to what can be expected from animals that are being worked in rough terrain.

These sturdy low-speed scooters are designed to do a specific job under certain conditions. They are intended primarily to supplant the horse or mule where saddle and pack stock is unavailable for prospecting trips, deer hunting or for reaching fishing streams and lakes which lie more than walking distance beyond the end of vehicle roads. They entail no feed problem and their gasoline consumption is so light that an adequate supply for long trips can be carried on the front forks of the machines. The Tote-Gote and Pak-

# WAY TO NAVIGATE THE DESERT



TESTING SCOOTERS IN DESERT SAND

Jak each have the power and traction necessary to carry one rider and a considerable amount of cargo through rough country at a somewhat greater speed than that which can be attained by an exceptionally good walker. Where prominent trails exist through foothill country and along major water-sheds or divides in the mountains, power scooters have a definite advantage over the foot traveler and, in many instances, they are faster and more comfortable to ride than a saddle horse.

But, away from the trails in rugged mountains, where there is a combination of rock slides, steep terrain covered with heavy brush, down timber, soft earth or an occasional stream to be crossed, power scooters can in no way be likened to even a disreputable specimen of a saddle horse. Under these travel conditions old Dobbin still performs marvelously, while the power scooter either cannot navigate at all,

or requires so much pushing and lifting that travel soon becomes a strenuous ordeal instead of a pleasurable experience.

Neither of the two scooters with which I am familiar will go into the really rugged places where a horse can be ridden. However, these faithful little machines will do some amazing things, and I'm confident that they are destined to bring tremendous changes to the desert because there are so many places that a person can go with a power scooter where he can't go with a four-wheel drive vehicle. These scooters are ideal transportation where distances are too great to walk and where, as is usually the case, horses are unavailable.

THE WEATHER HAD suddenly turned hot and daytime temperatures in the Chuckawallas soared to 120 degrees. Riding the scooters in the heat of the day became something of a chore, so we began making our test runs into

the mountains in the early mornings and late afternoons. We first experimented with the scooters on the sandy floor of the desert and found that by turning them carefully they worked fine. Sharp turns, however, usually caused the front wheel to dig-in, and then anything could happen, particularly if a person was riding with an open throttle. We next took them over narrow rocky trails in the mountains, and finally rode them on cross-country trips where there were no signs of a trail at all. With each performance we became more pleased with the manner in which the machines handled their loads in rough terrain.

At night the moon was full and the most exhilarating moments of the entire trip came as we rode the scooters with wide open throttles in the cool night air, skimming across miles of level land marred only by the old parallel tank tracks left by General Patton's armored columns during the early days of World War II maneuvers.

We outlined a theoretical route taken by Peg Leg Smith on his famous trip westward from the Colorado River, and followed this on our scooters in the hope that we might find the black wind-swept ridge where Peg Leg reportedly scooped up his corroded nuggets of solid gold. Next we moved camp into the area north of Rice and made some explorations into the Turtle Mountains, tentatively searching for clues to the Lost Arch Mine. The midday heat by this time was becoming more and more unbearable, although the nights still remained cool. With each passing day the hours that we could travel with any degree of comfort on the scooters became increasingly shorter.

We made a swing from Rice past



ERLE STANLEY GARDNER VISITS WITH A YOUNG CHUCKAWALLA IN A REMOTE CORNER OF THE CHUCKAWALLA MTS. NOTE BANDED TAIL, CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC OF JUVENILES OF THIS SPECIES

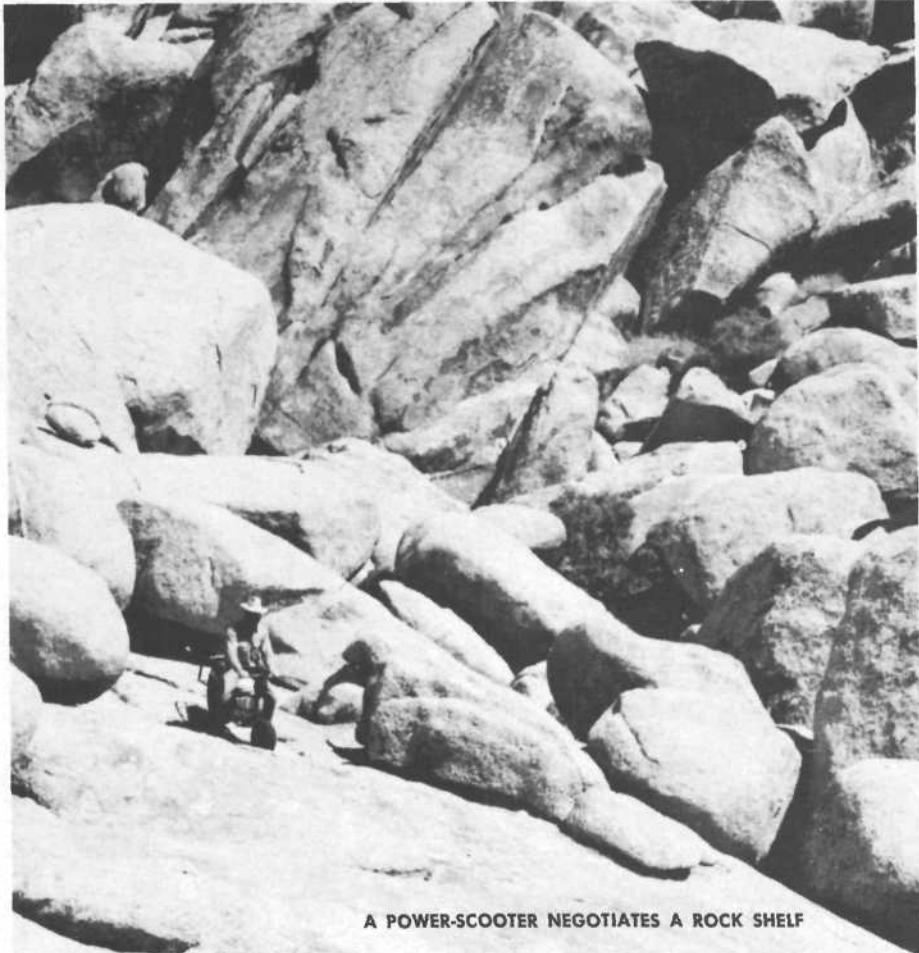
the Old Woman Mountains into the Devil's Playground country and there with the aid of our scooters located an ancient Indian campground of tremendous size which from all appearances had never before been visited by white men. There were *metates* and pottery shards in every granite overhang we explored, and obsidian chips from a nearby field of Apache Tears were liberally strewn over the area.

The tests concluded, we reluctantly turned our caravan back toward the Gardner Ranch at Temecula. On the way we arrived at Amboy where the thermometer stood at 115 degrees in the shade. In spite of the terrific heat we had subjected the scooters to in making our tests, we were happy to note that it had in no way affected their small air-cooled engines. We had not experienced a single mechanical malfunction during any of our runs, and we returned home in full agreement that these machines will bring interesting changes to the desert.

Folks who purchase power scooters should become thoroughly familiar with their little eccentricities before starting out into isolated areas. No person should ever embark alone on long trips into the desert on these machines. They are a reliable piece of recreational equipment that can bring their owner years of enjoyment—provided he does not underestimate the whims of the desert.

A new belt should be carried on each machine, along with a handful of tools consisting of a screwdriver, a pair of pliers, a small crescent wrench and a one-half by nine-sixteenths box-end wrench. Each power scooter used in the desert also should be equipped with a pint of motor oil, at least one gallon of gas and a large canteen of water.

These power scooters are tough and powerful in use, and on firm footing



A POWER-SCOOTER NEGOTIATES A ROCK SHELF

in the field they can climb straight up a 40 percent grade. They have adequate brakes for making a safe descent on a similarly steep hill, and they are easily transported long distances in a pickup or trailer. They weigh from 125 to 140 pounds and require very little storage space in the garage.

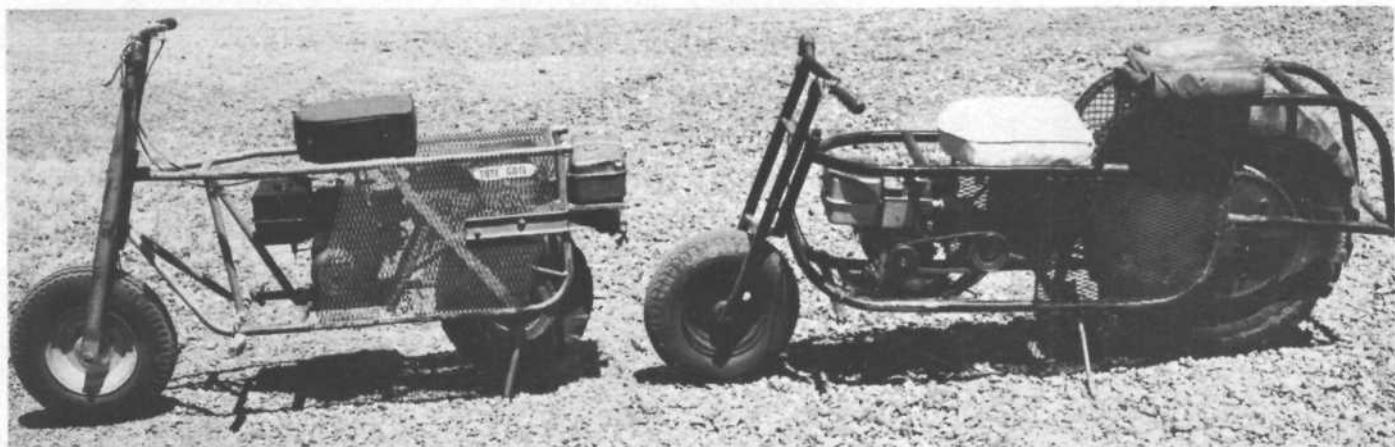
The Tote-Gote sells for around \$325. Selling price of the Pak-Jak is just under \$400.

Gardner purchased two of the Pak-Jaks and he and I enjoy riding them around the fence lines or cruising up and down the horse trails on the moun-

tain in back of the ranch. Riding a scooter is a lot of fun, and it's also good exercise. In fact, I think the man who invented the bicycle exercise machine years ago was on the right track, but he stopped a little too soon. Instead of perching his creation on four immovable cast iron feet, he should have put two wheels under it and then inserted a small air-cooled gas engine geared sufficiently low to drive the contrivance through rough country. With these two or three added features the inventor could have claimed a better exercise machine than the one he settled for, and a new world of outdoor enthusiasts would have made him their hero.

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CLOSE-UP VIEW OF THE TOTE-GOTE, LEFT, AND THE HEAVIER, MORE STURDY PAK-JAK



By NELL MURBARGER

"CALIFORNIA'S BEST GHOST TOWN": remote, un-promoted, and with the barest of tourist facilities, the sleeping ghost of Bodie attracts thousands of visitors every year—people from all parts of the world who come to see the tough mining camp which produced "THE BAD MAN FROM BODIE"—a Wild West catch phrase.

# BODIE TODAY

WHAT DEVOTEE of Western history has not heard — through fact or fiction—of "The Bad Man From Bodie?" Who this *hombre malo* may have been, whence he came, and precisely what he did to gain so unsavory a reputation, no one seems to know. But, whoever he was and whatever he may have done in the course of a misspent life, one thing is sure: he put Bodie on the map, and even if the 80-year-old town never attains California state park status (currently under consideration), America's most famous ghost town is doing very well by herself, thank you ma'am!

Any time a decrepit old mining camp far removed from large centers of habitation, 8300 feet above sea-level, and 10 miles from the nearest paved road, can lure to its shrunken bosom visitors from every state in the Union and half the countries of Europe—50 to 60 automobile loads of them every day during the summer—you may be sure that such a place is known the world over. Especially is this true when you consider the fact that not one penny is spent to publicize Bodie as a tourist mecca.

Three roads lead to Bodie, the best of them turning off U.S. 395 at a point just past Mono Lake. The road-sign here reads "Hawthorne Nevada" and a painted arrow points to the right down a black-topped road. Another road to Bodie starts at a point seven miles south of Bridgeport; and the third route—a rather rugged grade—comes in from the Nevada side.

On my most recent visit to Bodie I chose the first mentioned road. After following the blacktop for six miles, I turned left on a gravelled road that winds up the bottom of a long shallow

canyon. Another 10 miles brought me out on a wide dry mesa from which I looked down upon the old town.

From this vantage point I could see Bodie's narrow unpaved streets snaking through sagebrush, and flanking those streets are a hundred time-weathered wooden buildings. Spattering the brown hillside to the east of town are as many mine dumps as there are buildings on the flat; and on the hillside to the west rise the white stones and splintered paling fences of the old graveyard. From my hilltop perch no life was visible in the town—not a human being, barking dog, or curling wisp of smoke.

But Bodie isn't completely deserted. Neither is it that most obnoxious of all tourist traps, a "professional" ghost town. Here are no phony gun-battles staged in the street every hour on the hour; no "Old Original Something-or-Other Saloons" (built after World War II); no catchpenny hawkers, no guided tours to one-time homes of the great and not-so-great. In short, Bodie is just a quiet respectable old mining camp with a lot more past than future—a place that produced in its day

close to \$100,000,000 worth of gold bullion.

Its present population isn't large. The watchman, Clarence Birks, and his wife have made their year-around home here since 1958. Summer months find the resident population increased by four other persons who take to their heels a little before winter's first snow comes flickering over the sagelands. For several summers past the old town has had two active business houses. One, an art studio, is operated by Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Beaton of Carmel (summer residents of Bodie since 1956). Their studio occupies the lower floor of the two-story-and-cupola schoolhouse on Green Street, built in the late 1870s when Bodie was a roaring town of some 10,000 inhabitants, with a main street more than a mile long built solidly on both sides with one- and two-story frame structures.

The old school building is furnished much as it was for Bodie's last term of school. Dog-eared maps decorate the walls, crayon-colored Easter rabbits parade across the blackboards, and rain-stained window blinds hang

AN AUTO APPROACHES  
BODIE — ONE OF 50  
THAT COME HERE ON  
A TYPICAL SUMMER  
DAY. AT THE RIGHT  
IS THE CAIN MUSEUM.



askew. A few old jackknife-initiated benches and a rusty wood-burning stove still are functional. In the midst of this departed glory, as it were, Elise deCelles Beaton offers for sale her delightful water colors of desert scenes—and of Bodie—as well as other gift items appropriate to the locale.

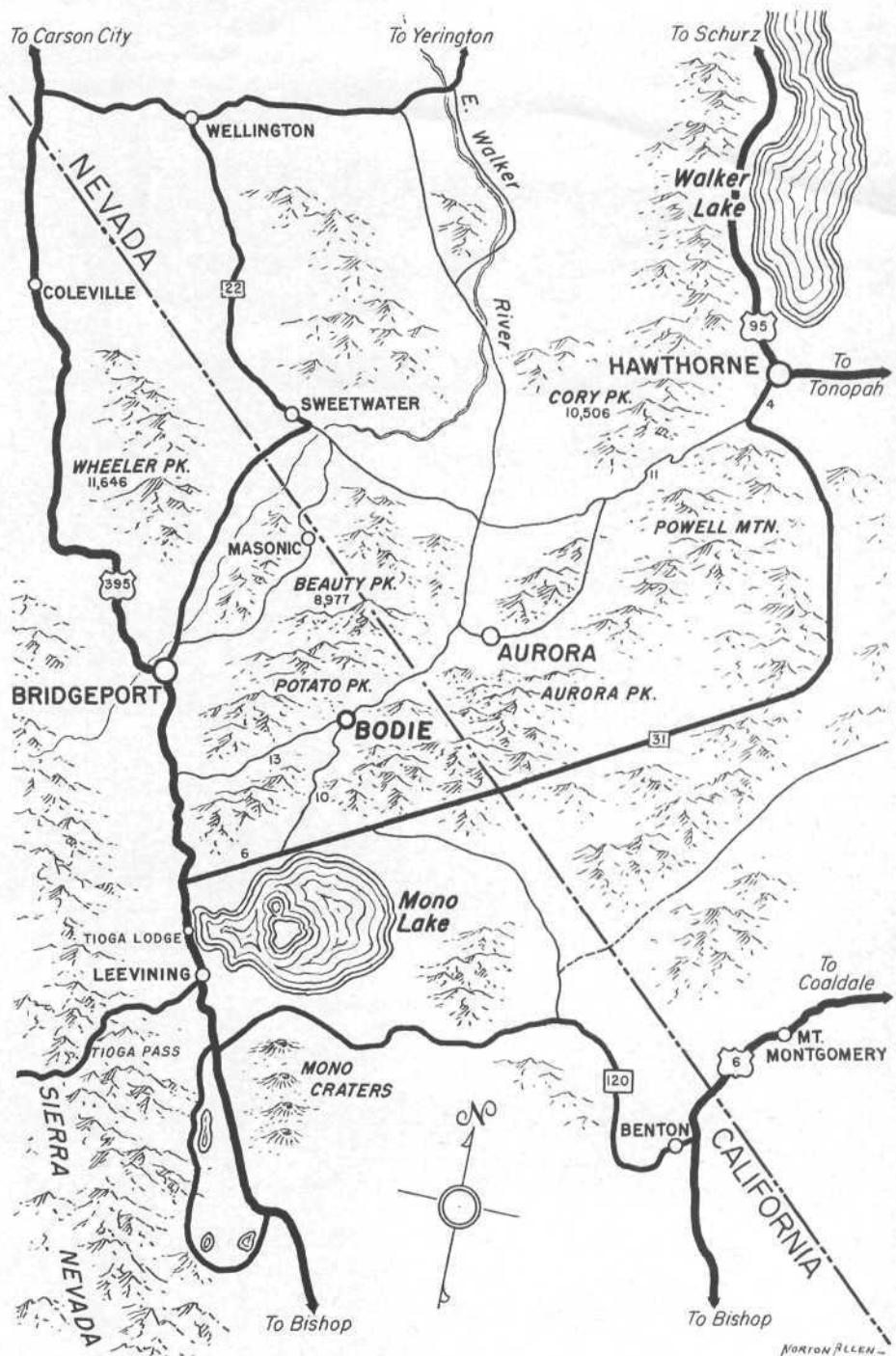
The other business house, if it may be so called, is the Cain Museum (admission 50c) located in the old Miners' Union Hall erected in 1878 and subsequently used for meetings, dances, shows, sociables and even funerals. Here Mrs. Birks is custodian of a fascinating collection of Bodie mementoes owned by Mr. and Mrs. Victor

*"Goodby, God! I'm going to Bodie," a Truckee, California, newspaper quoted a local girl as saying on the eve of her family's departure for the camp with the bad reputation. "Not so," retorted the Bodie paper. "A simple case of misplacing a comma. The little girl actually had said: 'Good, by God! I'm going to Bodie.'*

Cain of Bridgeport, about whom more will be said later. In glass cases and on the interior walls of the museum are exhibited hundreds of articles almost unknown today but thoroughly commonplace in the life of a 19th Century mining camp. Relics from Bodie's once-flourishing Chinatown, gold scales large enough to weigh a beef, guns, household trivia, old hats, pictures—even the two black-plumed horsedrawn hearses in which Bodie's departed were hauled to the cemetery at a fee of \$20 for the one-way ride.

Bodie's burying ground, incidentally, is one of the most visited spots in the town—but its tallest and most impressive tombstone honors a man who never saw Bodie, probably never even heard of the camp, and is buried some 3000 miles away.

Originally the stone was intended for William S. Bodey, who, in the summer of 1859, made the first discovery of placer gold in this area. That same winter Bodey froze to death in a blizzard. When his body was located the following spring he was buried where death had overtaken him, and the boom town that sprang up as a result of his discovery was named in his honor—with corrupted spelling. Some years later, in a burst of civic pride, it was decided that Bodey's bones should be removed from their lonely resting spot to a place of honor in the city cemetery; and in November, 1879—the 20th anniversary of Bodey's death—the removal was performed with the Bodie Brass Band providing



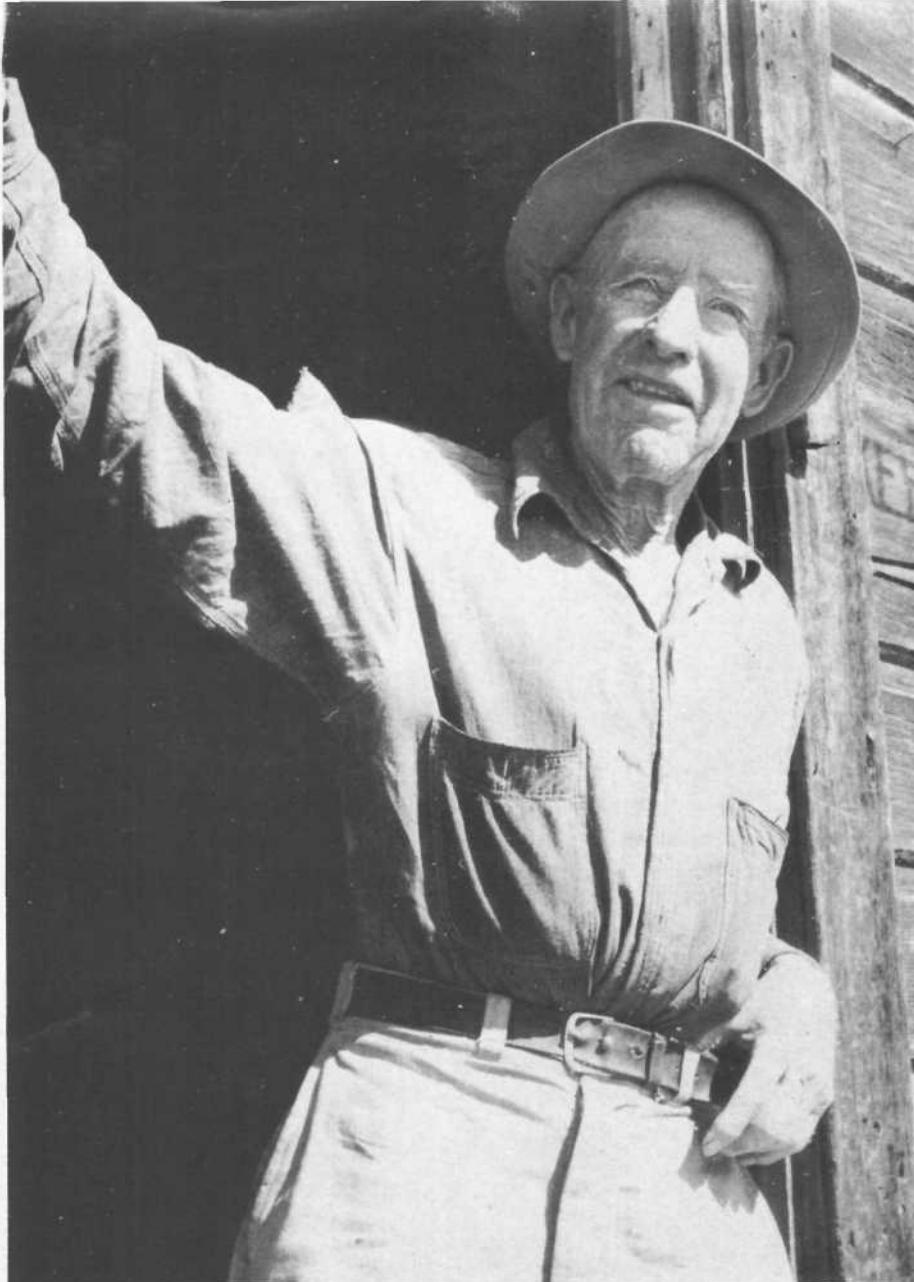
suitable music, and local luminaries making speeches. A sizable purse was raised to pay for a monument, and a sculptor was commissioned to chisel a tall shaft topped by an urn.

But, before the inscription was cut word reached Bodie of the assassination of President Garfield. By this time the fervor for honoring the camp's discoverer had begun to wane a bit—and inasmuch as Garfield had been a good Mason and the Masonic lodge was then one of the strongest organizations in the town, it came about that Bill Bodey's granite shaft was dedicated to a martyred president. Eighty years of buffeting by wind and weather has taken its toll but, with care, the

crumbling inscription still may be deciphered:

To the Memory  
James A. Garfield  
Prs. of U.S.  
Died Sept. 19, 1881.  
Erected January, 1882.

No one, presumably, knows the exact location of Bill Bodey's grave, but so that his name might not be forgotten, two years ago the Snowshoe Thompson Chapter of E. Clampus Vitus installed in the cemetery a large granite boulder bearing a bronze plate with the inscription: "This marker placed in memory of William S. Bodey, discoverer of the Bodie mines who lies buried on this hillside. Let him repose



EARL BELL STANDS IN THE DOORWAY OF BODIE CABIN IN WHICH HE WAS BORN 69 YEARS AGO

in peace amid these everlasting hills."

Elsewhere on the slope are the graves of Rosa May and Lottie Johl, two women from the redlight district. Doubting, perhaps, the ability of Saint Peter to distinguish the fine line existing between Bodie's saints and sinners, the strait-laced element of the town assisted him by pre-judgment, in which

Bodie claimed four world records: (1) The wildest mining camp (10,000 citizens, 7 breweries, 60 saloons); (2) The wickedest men; (3) The worst climate; (4) The best drinking water.

it was decided whether a deceased person had been sufficiently righteous to win a spot in the "hallowed ground" of the cemetery, or whether his moral fiber had been such that he must be buried outside the fence, in Boot Hill. Doomed to this category were the suc-

cessive Bad Men from Bodie, murderers, horsethieves and, particularly, "fallen" women.

Rosa May, pert, pretty and popular—at least with the men—was given a reasonably good position outside the fence, while Lottie, a "fallen" woman who had later married Eli Johl, Bodie butcher, and lived with him respectably for many years, won a place *inside* the fence—but only after a hassle that threatened to split the town. Those seated in judgment at last grudgingly agreed to her burial in hallowed ground, but only if she were buried in the farthest-out grave of the "respectable" section.

Thousands of tourists have visited these two graves—Rosa May's lonely little mound outside the fence, and Lottie's, far up in the weedy southwest corner of the cemetery. Enclosing the latter grave is a fine wrought-iron fence erected those many years ago by her sorrowing husband . . . and this summer I was rebelliously glad to see that

someone had decorated Lottie's gate with two attractive wreaths of ferns and artificial flowers.

Not far from the cemetery stands the old Methodist Church with its high belfry pointing heavenward. First time I visited Bodie, about a dozen years ago, the wall behind the pulpit was half-covered with a large wooden plaque on which was lettered the Ten Commandments. Later some vandal made off with part of this sign, and to preserve the remaining portion a former watchman stored it in an old building which could be locked. Eventually this watchman left Bodie

*"Quarrels in the (Bodie) saloons were frequent, and often accompanied by gun play, but these were not taken seriously by the community which had grown accustomed to 'having a man for breakfast' every morning."*—THE STORY OF BODIE

and, thus far, none of his successors have been able to locate the missing five or so Commandments!

Along Main Street, or closely adjacent, stands the firehouse, sundry restaurants and stores, the land office building, Oddfellows Hall, and the Miners' Union Hall; and up at the north-end of town is a big brick-and-steel walk-in vault—all that remains of the Bodie Bank after the disastrous fire of 1932 swept away most of the business buildings on North Main Street. (Bodie, in the course of her 80 years, has survived two major fires. At the time of the first big blaze, in July, 1892, in which most of the structures on North Main were destroyed, the camp was still active enough that the devastated section was quickly rebuilt. When the second major fire, 40 years later, destroyed the same part of town, Bodie's economy was tottering and the burned area was never rebuilt.)

Across the street north of the bank glowers the old jail with its three cramped, dismal and heavily-barred cells, in which have briefly reposed not a few stage robbers and other malefactors. Up the ravine back of the jail are the ruins marking the site of Chinatown.

It was Earl Bell who told me of Chinatown. Soft-spoken and white-haired, Mr. Bell lives on the street formerly known as Park Avenue, in the house in which he was born 69 years ago. His nephew, Bob Bell, comes up from Hawthorne each summer to live with his uncle. Together they prospect the surrounding hills for minerals.

Chinatown, according to Mr. Bell,

was a lively place with some 1500 inhabitants amply supplied with gambling and opium dens, saloons, and a big Joss Temple, as well as many stores — one of them occupying a three-story building. None of the local Chinese labored in the mines or mills — Bodie's militant Miners' Union saw to that—but a few of them did placer mining for themselves, or joined the Indian squaws in reworking the tailings. Mostly they operated restaurants and wash houses, and small shops. Other members of the colony kept the

*Bodie, at 8300 feet above sea level, has seen some wicked winter weather. At one time the West chuckled at this description of Bodie weather: "Eleven months of winter and one month of hell."*

town supplied with pinyon wood which they cut in the hills eight miles distant and hauled to Bodie on pack burros. Still others peddled fish shipped in salt brine from San Francisco, and one old Chinaman had a big greenhouse and raised vegetables.

"The greenhouse was made entirely of glass and was nice and warm inside even when it was cold and snowy outside," recalled Mr. Bell. "The old man would plant his seeds inside in the late winter—turnips and radishes and beets and lettuce—and after the season was far enough advanced he would move the plants into the open ground. Later he peddled the vegetables from house to house and everyone was glad to get them because fresh garden produce was scarce in Bodie, and a real luxury . . ."

Scattered over the vacant lots of the town are many vehicles in various stages of delapidation—dray wagons, freight wagons, carts, buggies and others. Many of these were equipped with runners where wheels normally would have been.

"Winters in Bodie were lots harder in the old days," Mr. Bell explained. "Mail, freight, passengers, everything had to be carried on sledges. There were even a few dog-sled teams. Several families owned fancy cutters lined with plush. When you took your best girl out in one of those plush-lined cutters, behind a high-stepping team in fancy harness, and the snow sparkling and sleigh bells ringing, even a very common sort of fellow could cut quite a dashing figure!"

In support of his statement that past winters had been harder, Mr. Bell displayed faded photographs showing Bodie with only the roofs of the houses protruding from the snow drifts. Another picture showed the decorated street and part of the crowd at one of



MATTHEW AND ELISE DE CELLES BEATON, WITH SOME OF MRS. BEATON'S WATER COLOR SCENES

Bodie's Labor Day celebrations. What especially attracted my attention was a tree tall as the two-story building beside which it stood. I had been told that no trees had ever grown in Bodie. When I asked Mr. Bell about it he grinned sheepishly, almost like a kid caught in his neighbor's melon patch.

"That's right," he admitted. "Trees won't grow in Bodie—too much mineral in the soil, I suppose. This tree in the picture was only a Labor Day tree. Each Fourth of July and Labor Day we would go out into the canyons and cut a lot of young quaking aspen and bring them back to town and 'plant' them along the street. They provided shade for folks watching the parade and contests, and as long as they stayed green the old town looked real nice."

Due, chiefly, to the high fire hazard, camping within the town limits of Bodie is forbidden. Folks are permitted to camp near a spring of water a short distance below town. The last

evening of my recent three-day visit, after the sun had slipped behind the rounded hills to the west, the last tourist of the day had taken his departure back to super-markets and neon lights, and Bodie's half-dozen citizens had repaired to their homes to light oil lamps and start preparations for sup-

*"While Bodie has met with one disastrous fire after another all through its history, this is of minor consequence compared to the shutting down of the mines." —THE STORY OF BODIE*

per, I sat for a long while on the worn wooden steps of the old church in the soft twilight. The bevy of swallows nesting under the eaves at last grew silent. A yellow moon climbed into the sky to cast its soft light over the empty streets and the silent graveyard, and to throw strange dark shadows



ISN'T THIS FUN? BODIE VISITOR TRIES TO GET A PEEK INTO INTERIOR OF A VACATED HOME.

around the looming hulk of the old Standard Mill. A little breeze began playing with the old church building, running its fingertips over the high leaded windows, and whispering through the gaunt belfry where no bell tolls.

With the summer night closing in upon me, I was thinking of my pleasant sojourn at Bodie and the wealth of stories I had been told. Stories of the little narrow-gauge railroad built in 1881 from Mono Mills to Bodie—

*One of Bodie's newspapers wondered why the reported lack of water should disturb the Nevada mining camp of Candelaria—it being charged that not more than a dozen citizens of that place ever used the commodity, either for personal ablution or as a beverage.—GHOSTS OF THE GLORY TRAIL*

a railroad only 32 miles long but incorporated at a million dollars . . . stories of the seven breweries in operation in Bodie at a single time, and of the several newspapers that had flourished here.

But of all the stories, none had thrilled me so much as that of the world's first long-distance transmission of electrical power. It wasn't a great distance—only 13 miles—but electrical energy had never been carried so far before and most folks said it couldn't be done, that the electricity would "jump off" into the air.

Tom Legett, superintendent of the Standard Mill, was convinced it could be done—and proved his point! When the power was turned into the system at its source on Green Creek, above Bridgeport, and lights began to glow in the Standard Mill and machinery began operating smoothly, it was an event that made news in engineering journals around the world and signalized an entire new approach to world progress and development.

And, of course, there had been stories of Aurora, Bodie's Nevada neighbor, six miles down the canyon. Bodie and Aurora had not always seen eye to eye—but what rival mining camps ever did? Aurora was the older by several years. It had come into being in 1860 when the California camp was still just "the place where Bill Bodey froze to death." In other ways, too, Aurora had Bodie licked 40 ways from Sunday. During the California - Nevada boundary dispute she had served simultaneously as the governmental seat of Esmeralda County, Nevada, and of Mono County, California; and she had once lynched four men all in the space of 30 minutes! Rivalry between the two towns, gen-

erally speaking, had been conducted in the spirit of good clean mining camp fun—but at one point relations grew so strained that it became necessary to station two companies of soldiers at the point where the Aurora-Bodie road crosses the state line.

Just as the fortunes of Aurora and Bodie have been inseparably linked, so have the fortunes of both towns been linked with the Cain family.

James Stuart Cain, mine and mill operator, banker, and major property owner, emigrated to Bodie from Carson City in 1879. Here he built one of the finest dwellings in town, still standing today on the lot east of the church. In this home, with its high glass windows and gingerbread trim, he and Martha Delilah Cain reared three children, Victor, Stuart and Dolly. In 1904 Victor Cain married Ella Cody, born at Bodie in 1882 and who had begun teaching the intermediate grades in the Bodie school in 1900. After their marriage they set up housekeeping in the once-fine home across the street from the church, and here they lived many years.

To Victor and Ella Cain, now prominent merchants in Bridgeport, belongs almost the entire credit for the fact that Bodie is still an interesting place for folks to visit, rather than only a shambles of caving cellars and crumbling foundations. The Cains have acquired Bodie properties one after another until today they own virtually the entire town. Nor have they done this with any expectation of profiting thereby. They simply want to preserve this old mining camp in which their respective forebears played such active roles.

One example of their protective influence is the schoolhouse where the youthful Ella tackled the formidable job of teaching a flock of Bodie youngsters, some of them almost as large as herself. Years after Bodie became a ghost town the county put the old building up for sale for scrap lumber. That this fine old structure should be destroyed was quite unthinkable to Victor and Ella Cain, so they bought the schoolhouse; and instead of razing

*So lawless was Bodie in its early days that people from far and near referred to it as "Shooters' Town."*

it for salvage, they began repairing and maintaining it, and paying taxes on it. In the same manner have other buildings come under their protection, and for many years the Cains have hired a paid watchman to guard Bodie against fire, looting and vandalism. Mrs. Cain also made an important contribution to public knowledge when

she assembled Bodie's fascinating history in a delightfully written 200-page illustrated book, *The Story of Bodie*, first published in 1956 and now in its fourth printing (available from Desert Magazine Book Store, Palm Desert, Calif. For \$4.31, cloth cover, and \$2.75, paper cover, post- and tax-paid).

In view of the Cain's long-time association with the welfare of this old camp, it goes without saying that no one is more interested than they in the acceptance of Bodie as a state park. Four years ago such action seemed imminent; but things have lagged, as things sometimes do, and at this writing the town's fate and future still hang in the balance.

I regard Bodie as the best desert ghost town in California, and one of the finest in the West. I believe it is important that our present ease-loving generation, and other generations to follow, should have the opportunity to see what life must have been like in the barren, bleak, isolated, hardship-ridden, pneumonia-scorched mining camps of the 19th Century.

Conversely, I would not wish to see Bodie "preserved" or "restored" at the cost of its weather-beaten charm. Every one of its old cabins, every outhouse, to my way of thinking, should



AUTHOR TAKES DRIVER'S SEAT OF DRAY WAGON

be left standing picturesquely askew; the old broken down sleighs and freight wagons should be left sprawling on the vacant lots, exactly as they have stood since the last time they were used—wheels missing, bolsters broken, brake rods forever immobile. Heaven forbid that the beautifully weathered pine lumber in Bodie's buildings should be desecrated with a coat of paint, or her streets paved!—and better the town be leveled to the

grass roots than have it turned into another honky-tonk tourist trap!

Preserve Bodie, yes, either with state funds or private means. But keep it looking as it does today, faded and splintered and battered and buffeted; but, withal, as completely honest and down-to-earth as the miners' brogans that once echoed through these now silent streets. //

By MADISON DEVLIN

**AURORA—GOLDEN CITY OF THE DAWN:** a few rugged miles east of Bodie lies the site of deserted Aurora. Little remains to suggest that this town was once Bodie's "better." Aurora's main claim to fame stems from its having been the local seat of government for two counties at the same time—one of them in Nevada, the other in California.

## A side-trip to Bodie's rival camp: AURORA

"HOW FAR IS Aurora?" I asked the man tending one of Bodie's still active "business houses."

"Why do you want to go there?" he asked in turn.

"Just to see what it's like. How many miles do you figure?"

The man scratched his head and thought a moment. "About 10 or 15," he answered.

"How's the road?"

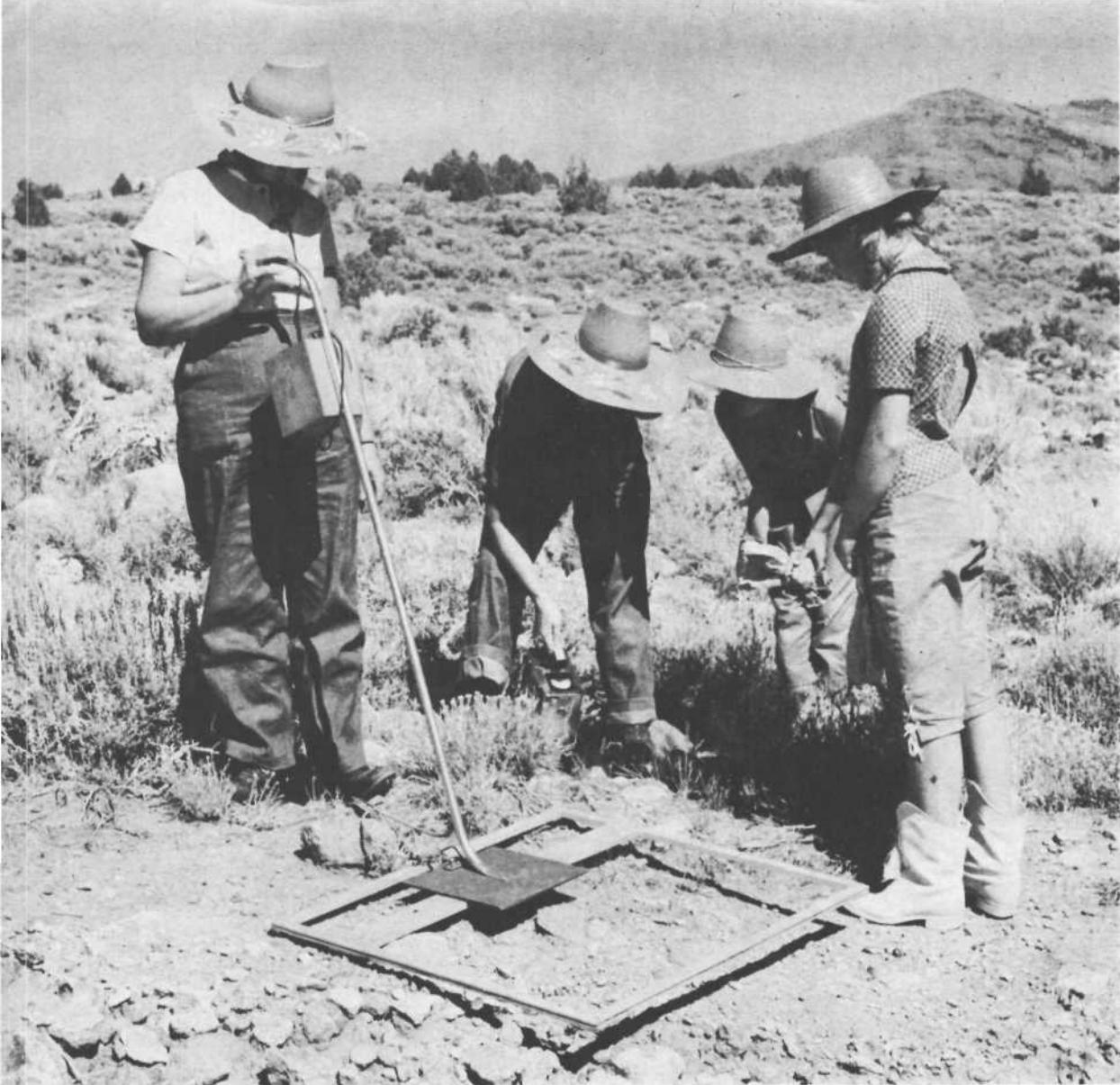
"Don't know," the man answered, "I've never been there."

Neither had I, but I wasn't about to leave this wildly

beautiful desert highland without visiting the site of famed Aurora where \$30,000,000 in gold had been taken out of the ground; a town whose two newspapers helped keep the rivalry with Bodie at a high pitch; and whose opera house attracted the best talent of the era.

The gravel road leading east from Bodie winds gently through sagebrush country featuring occasional outcroppings of rock and gnarled trees. It leaves the canyon a few times to top some hills—and to treat the traveler to enormous desert vistas.

I had the road to myself that summer day until I rounded a turn and saw a car parked off the trail, and



FOUR AMATEUR  
PROSPECTORS  
FROM MAINE WHO SPENT  
THEIR SUMMER  
VACATION LOOKING FOR  
GOLD AND  
URANIUM IN THE  
AURORA ENVIRONS

two women and two girls walking through the brush. The car had Maine license plates.

I stopped and offered my assistance.

"No thanks," came the reply. "Everything is all right—we're just prospecting."

"Gold?" I asked.

"Mercy no!" one of the women said. "Uranium!"

The ladies had a portable Geiger counter and a metal locator, while the youngsters carried canvas bags in which ore samples were deposited. Blue skies, fresh air tinged with a hint of sage, a challenging game (despite the odds against monetary success)—what better way to spend a day or a month?

The short side-road to Aurora joins the main gravel road at a sharp "V" angle. At this fork I found a low homemade sign which reads: "Kesco Mine 4 Mi." Under this—almost as an afterthought—were the words: "Aurora 4½ Mi."

The first mile of the 4½ is much like the "main" road, but then things begin to change. Instead of winding around the hills, the road goes directly up and over them. The boulders become larger, the road narrower, the ruts deeper. Five miles an hour is top speed on this stretch.

On the last up-pitch before Aurora, the road is full of loose rocks. These last few hundred yards had been rugged and the path ahead looked no better, so I left my car on the hill and walked into Aurora.

The town had mushroomed in a saucer-like depression at the juncture of three canyons. On the sides of these canyons are mounds of tailings. Trail-like streets and a few sunburnt buildings are all that remain of the town itself—scanty evidence that hundreds of miners once lived here.

Everything that could be moved from the buildings had been done so years before. There was little rubble because many of the building had been taken away board by board and brick by brick—common practice in those parts of the West where building materials were scarce.

Today the only Aurora structure that looks like it is in good condition is the brick schoolhouse perched on the side of one of the canyons. Inside though, its interior has been stripped to the bare walls.

My Aurora trip was not quite over. Returning to my car I saw my Maine friends walking up the hill, their eyes and ears glued to the instruments on their detectors.

We greeted again, and they scanned the buildings below.

"That's all that's left of Aurora," I told them. "About \$30,000,000 in gold was taken out of those hills. Why don't you try your luck? You might find uranium there."

"Do you really think so?" one of the ladies asked excitedly. "Come on! Let's go down and see."

I watched as they scrambled down the hill. Maybe they'll make the big strike that brings Aurora back to life, I mused. Who knows? //

By LILLIAN NINNIS

"SWEET CHILDISH DAYS, that were as long / As twenty days are now": When Lillian Ninnis of Reno read Harrison Doyle's three-part "Boy's Eyeview of the Wild West" in this publication, she wrote in to say that girls brought up in mining towns had fond memories, too. In this story she remembers how it was in Bodie where she spent part of her childhood.

# BODIE YESTERDAY

**W**E WERE Bodie kids, and for us the rough and ready camp was home. Dad worked a 10-hour shift in the Standard Mine for \$4 a day. He carried a tin lunch pail to work with him.

Some of the ore from the Standard was a beautiful white quartz streaked with free gold—an irresistible temptation to highgraders. The women who lived along the mine road insisted that they could tell by the way a miner coming off shift carried his lunch pail whether it was heavy with highgrade, or, jauntily a-swing, empty. And when a suspected highgrader decided to move his family to a newly acquired

of its day. Unpaved Main Street was lined with business houses and wooden sidewalks. There was a schoolhouse, a couple of churches and many small wooden houses. Few miners spent much money on a house, for wings sprout on a miner's feet when news of a new strike leaks out. The town was dominated by the Standard Mine and Mill. The mill, a big rambling wooden building with side-sheds filled with cord-wood for the steam boilers, was a constant fire menace. If the mill whistle shrieked and the fire bell clamored, everyone's first thought was, "Not The Mill! If it catches fire the whole town will go!"

sleep to the lullaby of the pounding of the mill stamps.

But, if the sleeping town was startled awake by heavy boots grinding on the road from the tunnel, no one needed an explanation. The distant yelp of coyotes joined the clamor of aroused dogs, lights came on and doors popped open to frame anxious faces. If Dad was on shift, Mother's breath was a smothered sob as she struggled with a shawl or coat to cover her night dress, and hurried down the steps to the road. Afraid to look at the dirt-smeared figure on the stretcher, she'd quietly question the bearers, then sag with relief when told: "Tom's alright,

HORSE-DRAWN  
FLOATS IN  
BODIE'S 1903  
FOURTH OF JULY  
PARADE



home or ranch, the women folks would knowingly nod at each other and remark, "It was about time he had 'er made."

Sometimes late on a summer afternoon we kids would walk to the entrance of the Standard tunnel to wait for the men to come off shift. We'd hike in and press an ear against the car tracks to listen. When we heard a click of movement on the tracks, we'd peer into the distant darkness until a bobbing far-away light would be seen. If it stayed just one light it would be an ore car drawn by a little donkey with a lantern hanging from his neck. If many twinkling lights bobbed about like fireflies in the blackness we'd soon hear the miners talking, each bearing his candle-stick.

Bodie was a typical mining camp

Because of the 9300-foot altitude and the sterile soil, Bodie had few gardens. When evening came candles and lamps were lit. The right coal oil lamp to own was a Rochester lamp. Ours had a beautiful round bowl base decorated with vivid pink roses, and a matching bowl hugging the clear glass chimney. This chimney was the cause of constant wrangling in our home. No one wanted the daily job of scouring and polishing away the soot. We bought these chimneys by the dozen from Weinstock & Lubin of Sacramento for 15c each.

Bodie was a snug little town, and at bedtime the gentle lights behind drawn window shades went out one by one. Then the only illumination came from the mill or from the peaceful stars above, and the town went softly to

Mrs. Mac, it's Jim . . ." or Jack or Bill or whoever the unfortunate might be.

"It's Tommy's father, children," mother would tell us. "He was caved on."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes."

Already friends were hurrying to comfort the distressed wife. Always when a miner died, each working miner donated one day's pay to the bereaved family.

When my Pa felt like indulging himself he fished a plug of Horseshoe chewin' tobacco from his jeans. Then he was ready for some real he-man enjoyment — but, not in the house! Mother was a gentle soul who believed our home was for the pleasure of all

who called it home—except when that person was chewing tobacco. Dad and his chew would head for the backyard where he'd sit on the sawbuck and chat and spit with his next door neighbor. We girls would call "dibsies" on the little tin horseshoes which were on every plug of tobacco. They made decorations for picture frames, or we hammered them onto the ends of our hair ribbons.

Some Bodie women had their washing done by Paiute squaws, and Paiute men sawed and split the cords of fine nut-pine wood. Maggie and Gesso did these chores for us.

Mother and Maggie were old friends. On Monday morning, come rain or shine, Maggie showed up to do the washing — unless it was pine-nutting time. Somehow Mother always sensed when Maggie wouldn't show up. On the morning Maggie reappeared she would stop at the wood-shed on her way to the kitchen. From out the folds of her skirt she'd lift a grimy 10-pound sugar sack half-full of pine-nuts.

"Well, for goodness sakes, have you been pine-nutting?" Mother would ask innocently.

"You gimme sugar?" Maggie would ask as she held out the nuts. Mother would push the sack aside.

"Give you sugar for that little dab of nuts? I should say not!" Then Maggie would make a trip back to the wood-shed, add a few nuts from her

cache, and start the bargaining all over again. This went on for several trips to the wood-shed. Finally Maggie would dump the nuts into a lard-can and Mother would fill the sack with sugar and put several cups of freshly ground coffee into a kerchief. While this was going on Maggie's eyes would wander over the kitchen, and a bar or two of laundry soap or a half-filled bottle of vanilla would be added to her bundle. When the limit of Mother's patience was reached, back Maggie would go to the wood-shed, to fetch another sack of nuts. Then the two women would laugh together at their hard bargaining and soft hearts.

Bodie's Fourth of July celebration was a blood-tingling event — new dresses, a parade, a band, a Goddess of Liberty float. I never reached the pinnacle of being the Goddess—but I did ride on a float and wave a flag with the name of a state printed on it.

There was free ice cream at the firehouse after the parade, and a kid could win a dollar in a foot-race down Main Street. Once a miner who had bet on me gave me a \$5 gold piece for coming in first.

As the dusty and happy day wore on, we were treated to our one dinner of the year at the dining room in Boyd's Hotel. With eager expectancy and our company manners we trooped into the dining room to sit with other families at long tables.

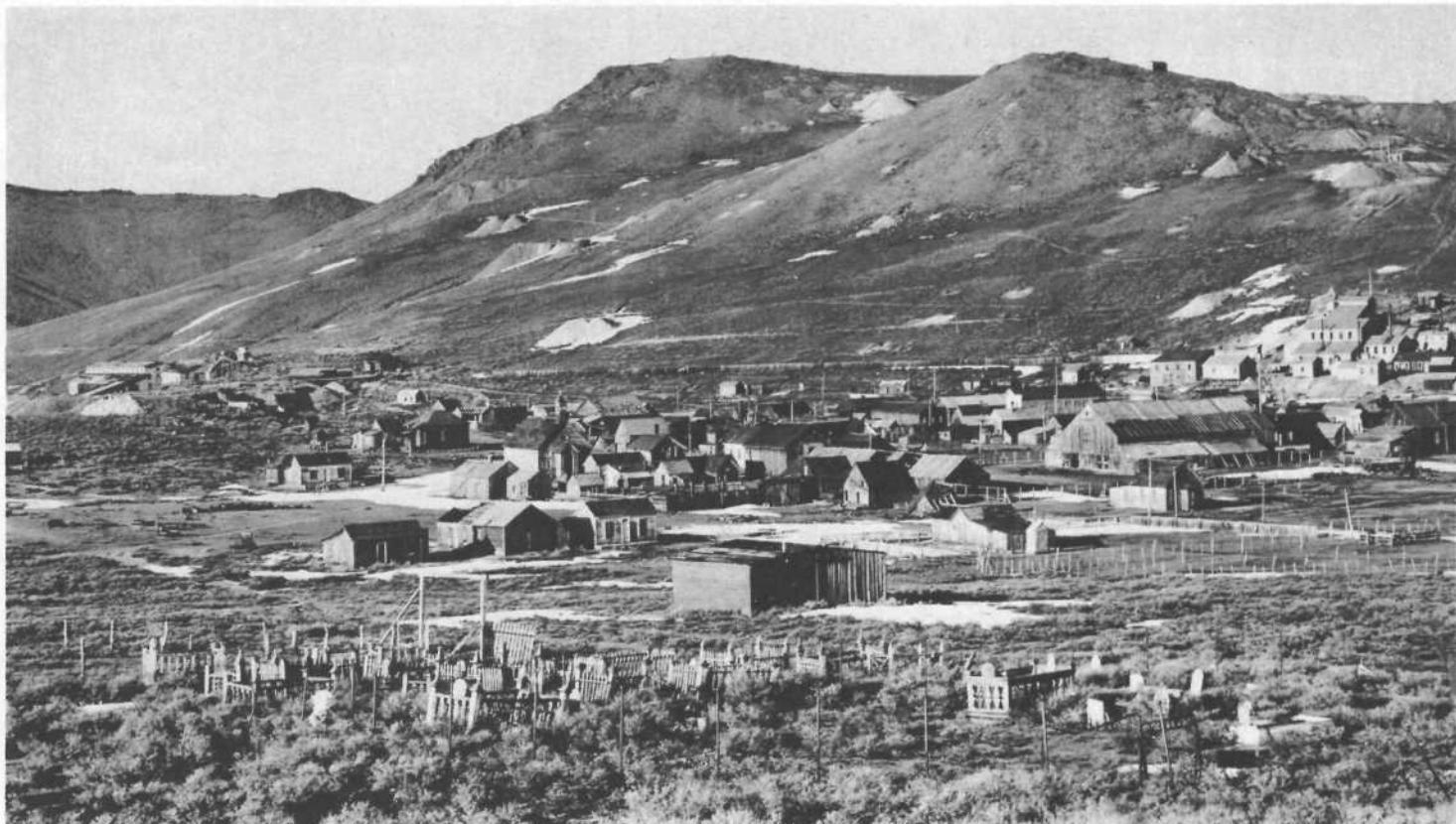
Later, after the fireworks display, it was bedtime, but Mother and Dad and all the other grown-ups got ready for the Grand Ball, there to polka and waltz until it was time for the men to go on shift the morning of the fifth.

Bodie winters were severe. Before the first snow fell the cellar was filled with firkins of butter, sacks of potatoes, boxes of apples, cases of canned vegetables, jars of home-canned fruit, glasses of jelly and jam, and several big "Our Taste" hams.

We had no hospital, and sometimes no doctor. For a chest cold Mother rubbed us with camphorated oil and turpentine or set us on fire with a mustard plaster, all the while pouring hot flaxseed tea into us. A bandage for a skinned knee was torn from an old bed-sheet or pillow case, and if we got a toothache the tooth was pulled the first time Doc Southworth came to town. If there was serious sickness or a new baby in a home, neighbors took the kids home and fed and bedded them down with their own, or "scooted" into the house with bread, pot roast or soup. They'd even take the washing home and do it with their own.

If a child came down with scarlet fever, diphtheria or some other contagious disease, the schoolroom reeked

BODIE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THIS CENTURY  
—MIDWAY BETWEEN BOOM AND BUST. FIRES  
HAVE DESTROYED HALF THE BUILDINGS SHOWN IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH.



of asafetida. Every child hung a bag of the fetid drug around his neck. Make no mistake, a self-respecting germ would not come near a schoolroom smelling like ours.

One day Dad came home with exciting news. A man named Jim Butler had found rich ore on the desert in Nevada. Wings were sprouting on Dad's feet, and in May, 1902, he hit the road for the new strike. By September our chickens had all been eaten, our house sold and some of our furniture shipped to the new mining camp of Tonopah. Mother hired a buckboard to take us over Lucky Boy Grade to Hawthorne.

Our good-bys had been said to dear friends and relatives and there were still traces of tears on our cheeks when we took our last look at the Old Syndicate Mill. Its soft brick walls were old friends. Many times, tired from a long walk over the hills, we had rested in their shade and enjoyed the sweet fragrance of the myriads of wild roses clinging to the crumbling bricks.

Last October Fred and I revisited Bodie after an exile of 57 years! At first I could hardly believe it — the most perfect ghost town we had ever seen in all our wanderings over California and Nevada. The church, the schoolhouse, the Miners' Hall — all painted a soft brown by the hand of time. The small houses we had lived

in stood in quiet peace, enjoying their undisturbed memories.

We parked on Main Street—where we, as children, had run foot races. Boyd's Hotel was gone. Reading's Store and Burkham's were gone. The Bank was gone.

We found Spence Gregory at a house near the school. Spence and I had been in the first grade together. The three of us sat down on some boxes outside, and "remembered" aloud. He told us about the dreadful time the Standard Mill burned to the ground; how the families had moved on to other camps; how the sidewalks sagged here and there as if weary from the many years of busy moving feet. He told of the disappointment when new people came in to rework the mines and then moved away, leaving a new corrugated iron mill to stand like a stranger in the midst of the mellowness of age.

I rediscovered childhood spots and I longed to give the old fire bell a tap. We examined a granite block which had been used in some by-gone drilling match. In the holes cut by long-departed hands, small plants have taken root, and bits of grass and twigs speak of the nesting places of tiny insects, happily unaware that the pure blessed peace surrounding them had as its beginning The Bad Man from Bodie.      ///

## POEM OF THE MONTH

### Desert Paradox

By

EUNICE M. ROBINSON  
*Santa Ana, California*

O desert, golden child of the sun,  
Jeweled at the dawn with cool night-scented dews;  
Bright beauty basking in the warmth of noon,  
Or washed at eventide with sunset hues;  
Here air is sweet with sage and cactus bloom,  
Here life unfettered roams, and winds are free.  
Treasure - laden mountains touch the clouds  
Above your calm expanse of sandy sea.

O desert, furtive child of mystery,  
Secret and silent in the gray of dawn;  
Athirst in the bleak and solitary noon,  
With mystic shadows formed when day is gone.  
Windswept and wild; forever fraught with change;  
Here grim and brooding mountain backdrops stand.  
Life pays with life; and hissing danger lies  
Coiled in camouflage against the sand.

O child of nature's whims!  
O ancient youth!  
Vessel of Earth's deception . . . and its truth!

*Desert Magazine pays \$5 each month for the poem chosen by the judges to appear in the magazine. To enter this contest simply mail your type-written poem (must be on a desert subject) to Poetry Contest, Desert Magazine, Palm Desert, Calif. Please include a stamped return envelope.*



• THIS IS THE SIXTH  
IN A SERIES  
OF ARTICLES BY THE  
DISTINGUISHED  
AUTHORITY ON SOUTHWEST  
INDIAN CULTURE:

*Laura Adams Armer*  
BASED ON HER  
1923-31 EXPERIENCES IN  
NAVAJOLAND

THE BACK-TO-BACK month was with us, the time when winter and summer meet; the new year to go on and the old to retrace its steps. It is not the lonesome October of the poets. The skies are not ashen and sober. The leaves are not crisp and sere. Pinyons are as green as ever in the Back-to-Back month. Junipers bear numberless blue berries which drop to the ground, forming halos about the brown trunks of the trees. The blue halos chime with the color of the mountains. October is the time of no clouds in the sky, of no winds on the mesas, the time when the blue smoke from the hogans lifts straight up to the turquoise sky.

Festivity was in the air in this autumn of 1927. The Night Chant, a nine-day healing ceremony of the Navajos, was to be given at Pinyon. George Hubbell, with his wife, was in charge of the store, having taken Henry's place. They made me comfortably at home. Working and studying conditions were perfect. Frank Walker, part Navajo, was to be my interpreter. With quantities of sand-colored paper, jars of poster colors and loads of photographic material, I was prepared for intensive activity. Permission to record the ceremony must be granted by the medicine man and his patient. Hubbell held a long pow-wow with the two, who argued:

"Why should we allow the white woman to see ceremonies which our own women do not see?"

When that objection was brought to me, I answered: "Tell them not to think of me as a woman, but as an artist."

How Hubbell managed so subtle an argument, I do not know. Only one of his understanding and sensitivity could have done so. A message came back:

"Let the white woman come because she wears the turquoise."

The Indians requested that I wear

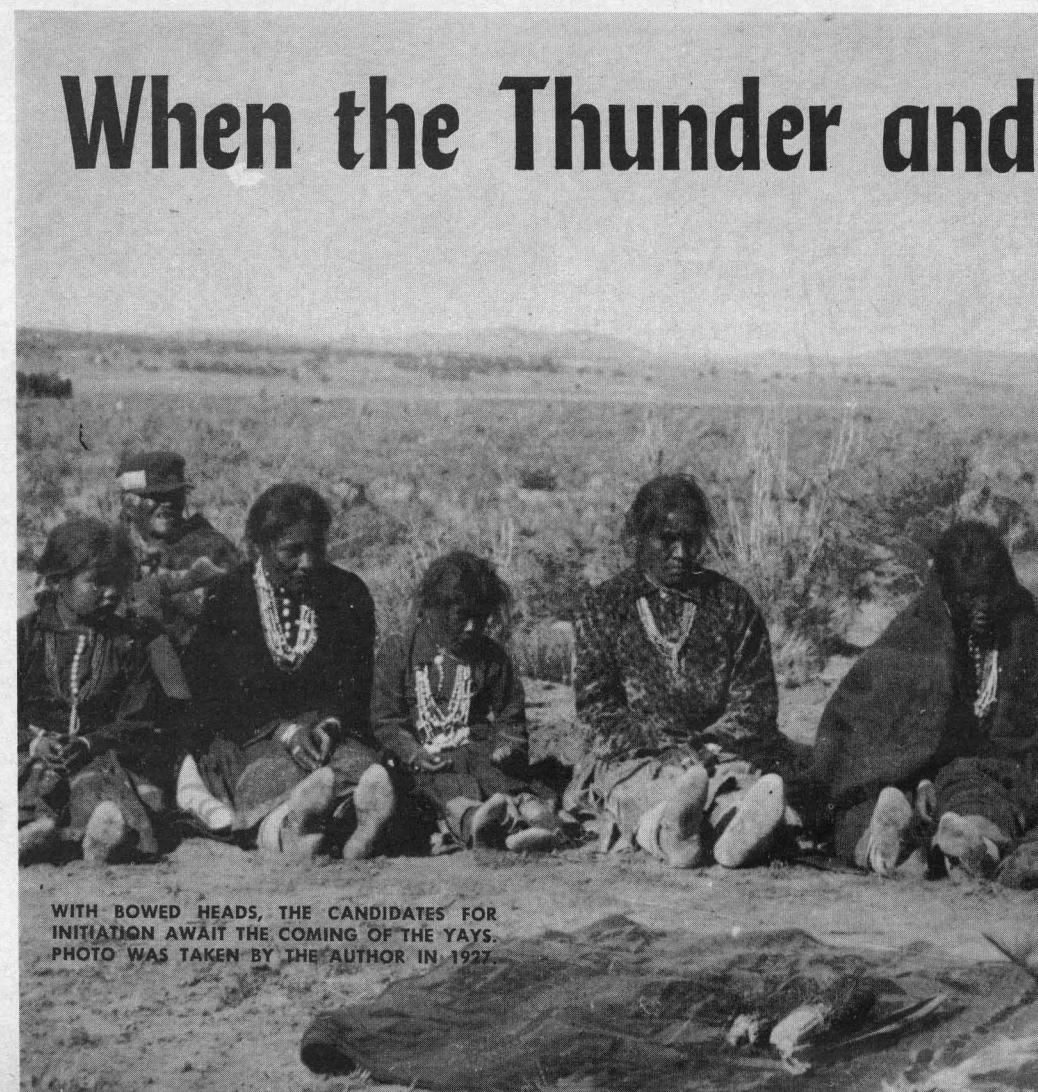
the earrings always. They said that life-giving powers are spoken of as turquoise blue. They tell of the Turquoise Horse who travels a turquoise trail in the deep above. In summertime his hoofs are shod with silver sheen. He treads upon the far side of the clouds. Is that why every cloud has a silver lining? The mane of the Turquoise Horse is strung with white shell-beads. His tail is a comet of silver strands swishing the pale star-flies away. You can feel his rhythm as he moves among the pillars of the sky.

The heavenly blue sent a benediction to all of us there on the desert sands. Men, women and children came from far-away hogans to hear the songs of their fathers, to watch the dancers of the ninth night and to renew their faith in tribal gods. The landscape blossomed with wagons covered and uncovered; with women wrapped in gayly colored Pendleton robes. The young buds rode in wagons with their mothers, mostly a joyous lot out for a holiday beneath a turquoise sky. The arid land seemed to exult in what it had produced. Small herds of sheep huddled near bales of hay brought for the stock. Provision was made for man and beast. Mutton

was provided and plenty of bubble-bread browned in the iron pots.

The medicine lodge stood completed, made of clean pinyon logs, hand-hewn. A blanket covered the entrance which opened to the east. Many young horsemen, wearing their felt hats, lined up to the north of the lodge to survey the proceedings. They were a colorful lot, all wearing turquoise earrings. Most of them had long hair knotted at the back of the head and wound with cotton strings. The hairdo was perfection itself when a good-looking young man like Mose brushes his black locks carefully after washing them in yucca suds. The orange silk handkerchief about his neck was most becoming to his brown skin. Obligingly Mose removed his big Stetson sombrero and allowed me to photograph his profile.

On the third morning the patient indulged in an outdoor sweat-bath. A trench had been heated with hot rocks and filled with aromatic herbs and boughs, upon which the patient was to repose. Hasteyalti and Hastehogan attended him. On the fourth day, I was invited to witness the purification ceremony. Frank Walker, lifting the



WITH BOWED HEADS, THE CANDIDATES FOR INITIATION AWAIT THE COMING OF THE YAYS.  
PHOTO WAS TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR IN 1927.

blanket from the doorway, directed me to walk sunwise around a small fire in the center of the lodge. He and I sat at the northeast end of a circle of 40 old Navajo men. We sat upon sheepskins placed upon the sandy floor.

The faces of the old men were kind. Sorrow, hope and resignation were written upon them. No meanness nor cruelty showed. The medicine man and his patient sat on the west side. All was quiet. Opposite me the first man in the circle held a small buckskin bag of pollen. He took a pinch of the powder between thumb and forefinger, touched his lips and the top of his head with the powder and then tossed the rest toward the sky-hole. He passed the bag to the next man. I watched carefully as it went its rounds, so that I should know what to do when it reached me. All eyes were fastened upon me as I applied the sacred powder to lips and head and offered it to the sky. Feeling that I had passed the test, I was taken aback when Frank Walker whispered:

"For what did you pray? They want to know for what you prayed."

I had not known that I was to pray. I said calmly:

"I prayed for good weather for the ceremony."

Their faces showed that my words were acceptable. The medicine man began to chant and to shake his gourd-rattle while the patient removed his clothing, piece by piece, handed each article to an assistant who dipped them in a basket of yucca suds. Even the turquoise necklace was purified, and then the string which held the queue of black hair. The hair itself was dipped in the suds. A ray of sunlight fell upon the patient's bronze shoulders as he leaned over the basket. After the bath, the assistant rubbed corn-meal over the skin and the man redressed.

The next day the first sand painting was made on the floor of the lodge. I sat with my paper and water-colors, ready to copy the intricate patterns as 10 young men poured the sand held between thumb and forefinger. The clean sand which was spread on the floor was smoothed with a batten stick. The painting was begun in the center so that the men could work out from it. They kneeled on the floor as they

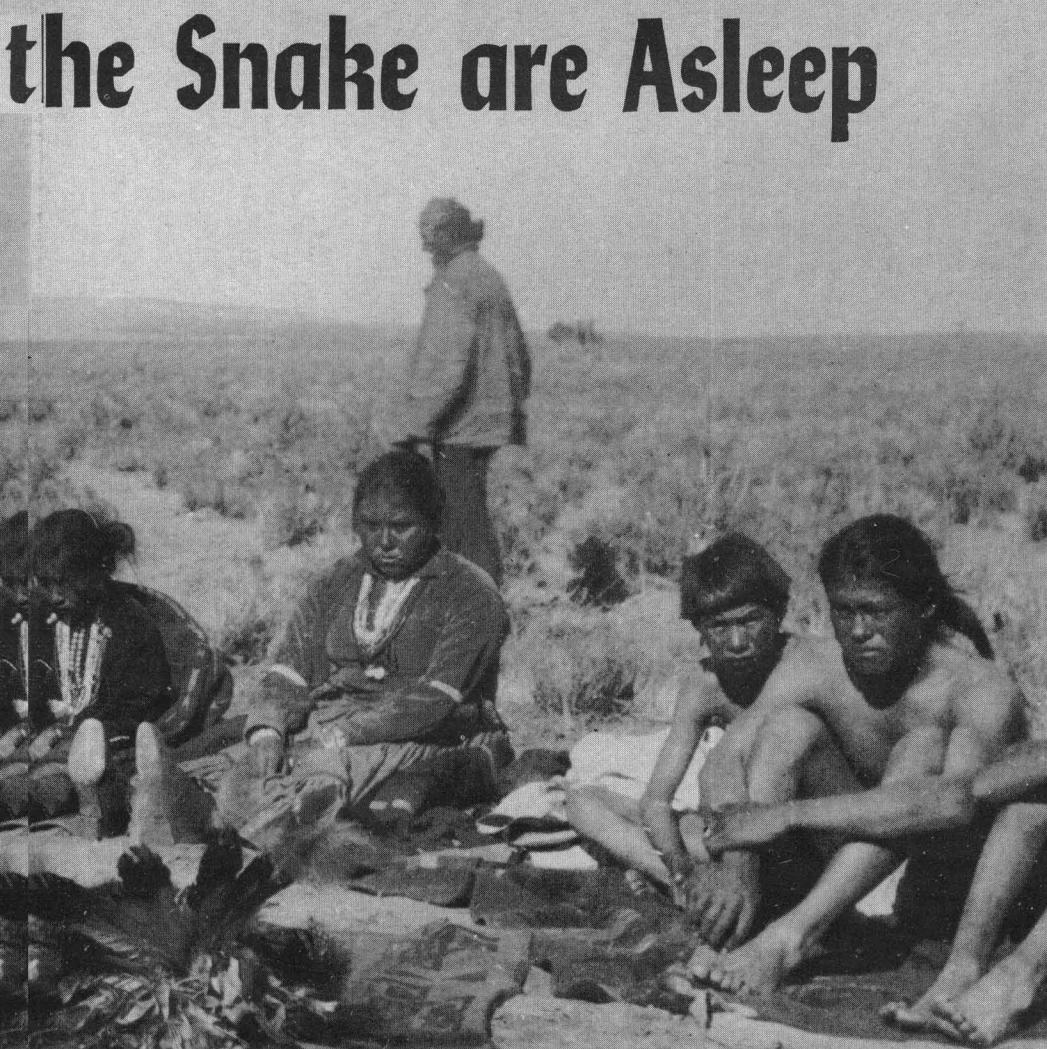
worked. In the middle a blue circle indicated water surrounded by a line of white foam, yellow pollen and blue and red rainbow. From the pool, black lines representing spruce logs reached from west to east and from north to south, forming the cross of the four quarters. Between them, springing from the pool, grew white roots of four domestic plants, three roots for every plant. The maize, the tobacco and bean were painted blue. The squash vine was black, bearing four squashes of the four cardinal colors. Beautiful birds were drawn on top of the plants.

Figures of the holy ones with their wives were made to stand on the whirling logs. The pattern took on the form of a swastika. Now that the holy ones were embarked on their whirling logs to spin happily about the lake, I could imagine them singing their good songs of the arrival of maize, the planting and the harvesting. All was ready for the portrayal of the four gods who stood at the cardinal points. Three of them were drawn with ornamented canes with which to guide the logs as they whirled. The fourth, standing as guardian of the east, was the white Hasteyalti, the Talking God, with a blue squirrel dangling from a red and blue string. When I started to copy the squirrel all the young men stopped their work to watch me. One said:

"She cannot draw a squirrel."

That put me on my mettle. I took pains to copy exactly. After that test I was accepted by my fellow artists. It was a sort of squirrel initiation. When the painting was finished the patient sat on the west side of it, facing the east. Sacred corn-meal was applied to his body, incense burned at his feet. The ceremony consisted of endless details, every one important for restoration of health.

For three consecutive days paintings were made. Many details of paintings and of songs have to do with the culture of the corn which is the main subsistence of life of the American Indian. On the day when the third painting was made, boys and girls were initiated outside of the lodge. They sat in a semicircle on the desert sand. The boys were stripped to the loin cloth, the girls dressed in their very best. Some mothers and grandparents sat near the girls. All heads were bowed, for the uninitiated must not see nor know about the masked gods called yays. The trusting boys and girls sat on the ground as their ancestors had done throughout the centuries, not knowing what mystery was to be enacted by the yay with a yucca whip. Crosses of corn-meal were



drawn on the chest of a naked boy who stood upon a blanket. One yay struck him twice with the yucca leaves. The blows were gentle, causing no pain. An ear of corn with short spruce boughs was applied to the feet, the palms of hands, back, shoulders and heads of the girls. After this the representatives of the yays removed their masks. The children were supposed to be surprised, but no change of expression showed on their faces. They accepted whatever came their way, unquestionably and in faith. They were a serious group of young people, learning something of the great need of human beings to keep in touch with Mother Nature, to know the ways of growing corn, beans and squash. After initiation they could look upon the marvelous sand paintings and learn to pour the sand themselves in patterns of beauty, symmetry and symbolic verity. Thus are artists made among the Navajos, artists who feel the rhythm of the universe and the wonder of all things animate or inanimate. They learn to sing when the Morning Star arises at dawn:

"Big Star, I am your child. Give me the light of your mind that my mind may be light."

The masks used at the Night Chant had a most romantic history. They were owned by a medicine man who was the uncle of the shaman who presided at the ceremony I witnessed at Pinyon. Very old, handed down from uncle to nephew through many generations, they were hidden in a cave in Canyon de Chelly at the time of the Navajo exile to Fort Sumner in 1862. Years later the medicine man and his nephew returned for the precious deer-skin masks. They were repainted for every ceremony and finally came into the possession of the nephew. When I showed him the Ethnological Report containing James Stevenson's account of the Night Chant with reproductions of sand paintings and masks used at Keam's Canyon in October, 1885, the shaman-nephew was moved almost to tears. He said to Hubbell:

"It was my uncle who gave the ceremony 42 years ago. I helped him at that time."

I allowed the tears to blur my eyes. Being blurred, they saw as in a mirage the generations of priest-poets pouring colored sands in patterns of hope as they chanted the songs of the House of Dawn and of Evening Twilight. I did not remain for the ceremonies of the ninth night. I felt that I could absorb no more. There was much to think about.

I sent the films home to be developed, and worked for a few days in Oraibi with Ashi, who wished to give me more sand paintings. We sat on the floor of my room, painting cactus people and the four winds. Ashi seemed impressed by my ability to work, so much so that he named me the Hard-working Woman. I liked the name. It was neither flowery nor false. The Hard-working Woman had little time for frivolity. Its nearest approach came on Thanksgiving Day when Hubbell asked me to witness the doings of the ninth night of another Yeibichai Dance. //

Next installment: "The Unfinished Ceremony"

THE YAYS PRESS INSTRUMENTS OF CORN AND SPRUCE TO THE GIRL CANDIDATES DURING THE 1927 INITIATION CEREMONY



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BOOKS: "PANNING Gold for Beginners," 50c. "Gold in Placer," \$3. Frank J. Harnagy, 701½ E. Edgeware, Los Angeles 26, California.

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HARD-TO-find books located. Millions available through world-wide contacts. Book Land, Box 74561L, Los Angeles 4, California.

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TUMBLE POLISHED Arizona fire agates, \$2.50 each. Agates, jaspers, \$3.50 pound, plus postage. Apacheland Agate Co., 501 North 17th, Phoenix, Arizona.

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continued

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VIRGIN VALLEY opal: Recognized world's most colorful specimens, a must for all rockhounds, from our own mine in the Silicon Range, Nevada. 4-inch vial \$3. Money back if not as represented. Jade Rocks & Shells, Box 87, Shell Beach, California.

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WILL TRADE mixed obsidians for agate, or sell gold sheen, silver sheen, olive green banded, spider web, feather, ambers, etc., 60c pound postpaid. Blacks for doublets, etc., 25c pound postpaid. Colorful commons, 35c pound postpaid. Ashby's, Route 2, Box 92, Redmond, Oregon.

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AUTHENTIC INDIAN jewelry, Navajo rugs, Chimayo blankets, squaw boots. Collector's items. Closed Tuesdays. Pow-Wow Indian Trading Post, 19967 Ventura Blvd., East Woodland Hills, Calif. Open Sundays.

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UNIQUE LOVELY bracelets of ten different identified gems set flat on untarnishable gilt H.P. mounting. Choice of "Gems of the World" or "Western Gems," \$3 each. Also choker-style necklaces to match, \$3.75 each. Tax, postage included. Bensusan, 8615 Columbia Ave., Sepulveda, California.

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# TRADING POST CLASSIFIEDS

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# TRADING POST CLASSIFIEDS

continued

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**GHOST TOWN** items: Sun-colored glass, amethyst to royal purple; ghost railroads materials, tickets; limited odd items from camps of the '60s. Write your interest—Box 64-D, Smith, Nevada.

**MAC'S ORIGINAL** timberline weathered wood. Finished table or what-not shelf pieces, 6 for \$10 postpaid. Write for prices on patio pieces. Cody Inn Curio Shop, RR 3, Golden, Colorado.

**WELLS FARGO** relics wanted, signs, boxes, guns, etc., first 40 issues Desert Rat Scrap Book. Also Death Valley chuckawalla. Tom G. Murray, 2435 A Oak Street, Santa Monica, Calif.

## Hard Rock Shorty of Death Valley

The following Hard Rock Shorty episode is reprinted from the first issue of Desert Magazine—November, 1937.

"Shucks, I must be gettin' old," gloomed Hard Rock Shorty, as he asphyxiated a passing bug with a cloud of pipe smoke and then leaned back on the porch bench waiting for more victims.

"I was just thinkin' about it today, an' it's twenty-five years ago this July that old Bags Bafoon froze to death over on Freeze Up Gulch. Seems just like last week! Old Bags was an old-timer in the Panamints, but he'd been gettin' kind o' childish, dreamin' about Minnysota or some heathen place. Then one Fourth of July as he was hikin' into town, why a regular buster of a windstorm come up. Old

Bags knewed enough to get out o' the wind an' cover up his head, but he hadn't rightly figgered on the pilgrim with the load o' popcorn. This newcomer was headin' into the town of Inferno with this little dab of corn, figgerin' to sell it to us boys to while away the long winter evenin's with, when this storm catched 'im.

"He clumb out under the wagon all right, but the sun was so hot she popped all the dang corn an' the wind blew 'er away. Old Bags woke up an' found himself buried about seven foot deep in the stuff an' them dreams o' Minnysota blizzards got 'im. He froze to death! We like to never got 'im thawed out enough to bury proper."

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## • MISCELLANEOUS

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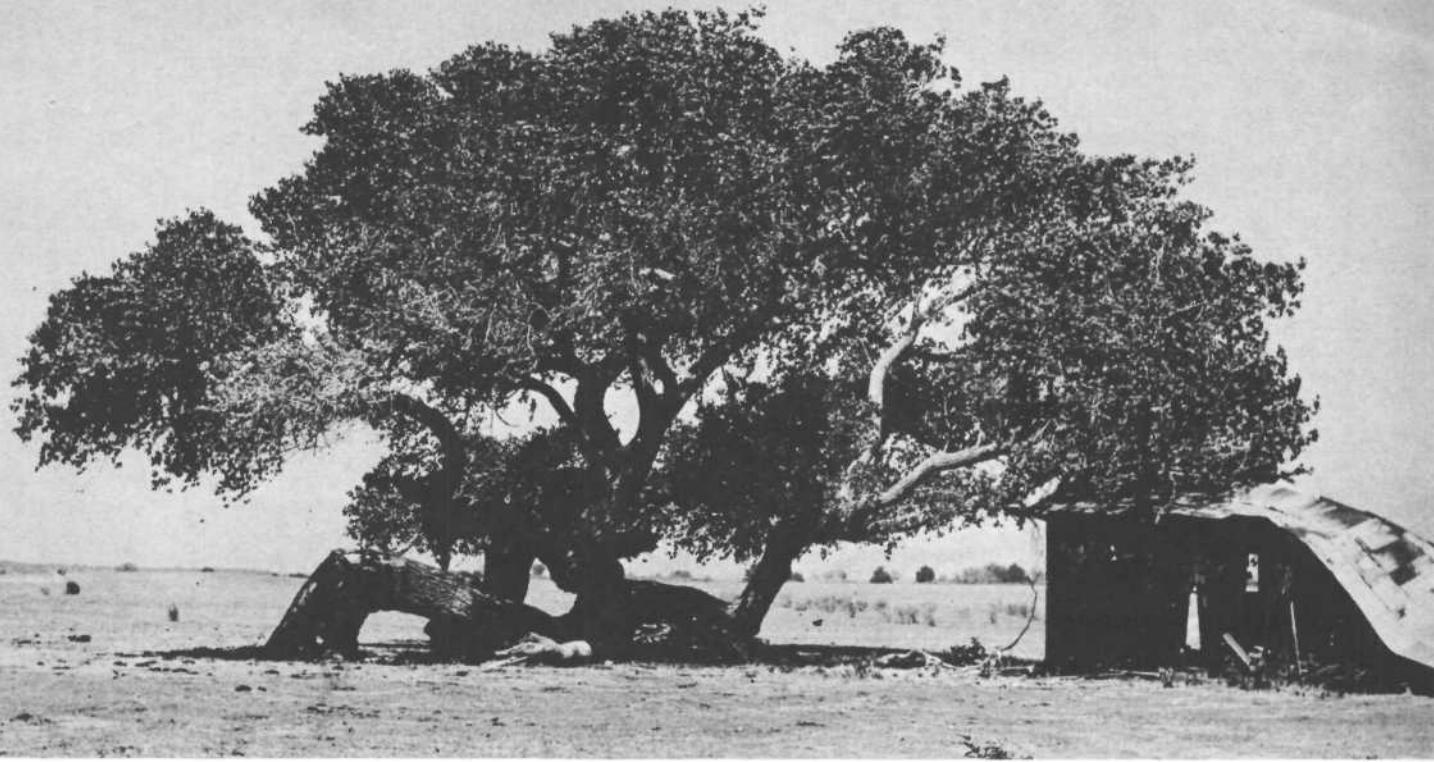
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# Cottonwood

## THE DESERT'S 'TREE OF MANY PLEASURES'



By EDMUND C. JAEGER, D.Sc.

author of "DESERT WILDFLOWERS," "THE CALIFORNIA DESERTS,"  
"OUR DESERT NEIGHBORS," "THE NORTH AMERICAN DESERTS"

COTTONWOODS are cheerful sun-loving trees familiar to every desert traveler; and the cottonwood most common on the far southwestern desert is Fremont's Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) described long ago by Sereno Watson (assistant to Asa Gray) from specimens collected by John C. Fremont, the explorer, botanist and soldier, while on his famous western travels of the mid 1800s.

One of the finest and most picturesque Fremont Cottonwoods I have seen in all of my wide and varied wanderings afoot and by auto is found on the old Las Flores Ranch on the Mojave Desert at the north base of the San Bernardino Mountains (see illustration above). Its great gnarled main trunk, covered with gray deeply-furrowed bark, lies somewhat prostrate and twisted like the form of a writhing serpent. The tree is at least five feet through at the base. Twice it has raised itself, only to rest on the ground again where it has taken root; then, twisting upward a third time, it branches to form a huge hemispherical

leafy crown of green, fully 60 feet across and 50 feet high. A sight always to marvel at because of its rare beauty of form, this veteran of scores of years has witnessed much of interesting and tragic history, from Indian massacres to peaceful wanderings of primitive peoples and immigrants. It should be visited, revered and made into a shrine by tree lovers far and near.

Given a plentiful supply of moisture, cottonwoods grow rapidly. Planted as seedlings or as posts, they will yield considerable shade by the second year. As a rule they are not long-lived trees, but sometimes weather drouths and storms for nearly a hundred years. Such old trees, with their battered and angled trunks and massive crowns of green, offer a most appealing sight, especially when seen standing singly or in small groups about isolated springs. Hundreds and hundreds of old cottonwoods line the banks and mark the meandering course of the Rio Grande and San Juan River in New Mexico, and the long Rio

Florida and its tributaries on the northern plateau of Mexico. Cottonwoods also are familiar sights, along with Lombardy Poplars, about Mormon villages and ranches in Nevada, Utah and Arizona.

Along the lower Colorado River and its delta in Baja California, and greatly enhancing the beauty of its winding mid-desert course, is another cottonwood, the Macdougal Cottonwood (*Populus macdougallii*) with bluish-green foliage. It was named after Dr. T. D. Macdougal of the Carnegie Institution, whose name is irretrievably linked with his painstaking study of the root systems and growth habits of desert trees and shrubs. This tree was widely planted in the Imperial and Coachella valleys in early days. In contrast to the spreading-limbed broad-crowned Fremont Cottonwood, it grows more upright and has less furrowed bark.

The ovate round-notched leaves of all the cottonwoods are almost constantly in motion, and if the breezes are strong the leaf blades striking one

another cause very characteristic and pleasing rustling and clattering sounds. "The ripple of the foliage," says Liberty Hyde Bailey, "recalls the play of wavelets on a pebbly beach." The long leaf-stems or petioles are much flattened sidewise and allow the leaf blades to turn readily in every wind.

In the summer the leaves are a cheerful yellowish green, but with the first frosts of autumn they take on rich colors of yellow, making the trees appear like domes of gold. Early falling to the ground, these leaves form a colorful carpet appealing in both odor and color to every saunterer of stream banks and moist arroyo bottoms of desert lands. Later in the year these yellow leaves turn brown, and remain unrotted for a long time.

In early spring, before the new leaves appear, the trees "hang heavy" with numerous flower catkins, those on a particular tree being either male or female. The strings of male flowers are two to four inches long, and are especially appealing because of the numerous - stamened red - anthered flowerlets, each subtended by a fimbriate scale-like bract. The female flowers are borne along a two-inch stem. These are less prominent than the male variety until they develop their numerous large green capsular fruits.

When these pea-size fruiting "pods" break open, they release myriads of seeds. The number of seeds produced by a single large tree is astonishing. Witness the fluffy feltlike mass of fuzzy-tipped seeds under any large female cottonwood tree. The germinating rate is very high and little wonder it is that we often see thousands of seedling plants springing up on damp sand bars or along the moist edges of streams and springs. Most of them die, but sufficient numbers live to start a dense thicket, or later a fine grove of older trees.

The exceedingly small seeds, with their cottonlike end-tufts of white hairs, are borne aloft and distributed far by every wind. Thus do we account for the presence of trees at lone springs in the desert arroyos. It is the green of these cottonwoods and perhaps a Washingtonia palm or two that often marks the site of some tiny seep or streamlet that signals from a distance help to the thirsty wayfarer along desert trails.

Some years ago I camped under a massive Fremont Cottonwood located in back of the picturesque Judge McCallum adobe in old Palm Springs. There were several dead branches of considerable size, and into these a host of large blue-black carpenter bees had

"chiselled" their tunnels. All day long the big black workers were noisily going in and out of their holes.

I decided to see what was going on inside the galleries, and cut into one of the limbs. Within the half-decayed wood I found many finger-sized burrows eight to 10 inches in length. At first they went straight in, then turned upwards. Within each I could see rather thick partitions dividing thimble-sized compartments, each of which held masses of bee-bread made of a kind of honey and pollen.

On each store of bee-bread a single egg had been laid. In some of the "cubicles" the eggs had hatched and the larval bees were greedily feeding. Not wishing to further disturb them and my bee artisans busy with tunnel-making, I "boarded up" the scar with hopes that no damage had been done to the strange bee domiciles.

Extensive burrows in cottonwood are also made by the feeding larvae of clear-winged moths. One of these is called the Cottonwood Crown Borer. These creatures also attacks willows.

The puss moth larva of *Cerura nivea*, so called because of its curious cat-like "face," eats cottonwood leaves. The last segment of the larva's tapering greenish brown abdomen ends in two long and slender caudal processes or horns which it lashes whip-like over its back. From these it projects short thread-like extensions which emit an odor to ward off the attack of parasitic wasps. When ready to pupate, the strong-jawed cottonwood-green larva actually chews up wood of the tree trunk or branches to make a smooth trough-like depression in which to lie. Then using its tiny wood chips and a gluey secretion, it constructs a coffin-like lid to seal itself in and protect it while those strange transformations that change it into an adult take place.

The enormous poplar sphinx (*Pachysphinx modesta*), largest of the western sphingids, is commonly found wherever cottonwood grows. The forewings are a soft cream tan with faint mottled patterns; the underwings have much magenta on them. The larvae are huge (finger-sized) and green with seven lateral stripes.

The green pea-like lumps on the stems of cottonwood leaves are caused by aphids. Break open one of these galls and you will see the numerous gray winged and unwinged insects resting or crawling around in the spacious inside cavity.

Along the Colorado River the presence of cottonwoods is directly related to the welfare of the beaver which

cuts down young trees and sometimes older ones of considerable size to make up the foundation of its dams. Moreover, cottonwood bark comprises one of the beaver's principal foods. These animals were very plentiful along the Rio Colorado a century ago, but over-trapping almost exterminated them. It's the old story of man not looking to the future.

Two of our orioles—Bullock and the Arizona Hooded—use fine grasses, horse hair or the fibers of nearby palm leaves and yuccas to weave their pendant nests in cottonwoods. The colorful male birds are always fine and spirited singers, and we are glad to associate them with our beloved trees.

As a rule, old cottonwood trees are infested with a big-leaved mistletoe (*Phoradendron flavescens*), yellowish green in color. The numerous big bunches of semi-parasitic plants are especially evident in winter when the trees are leafless. The mistletoe berries are a favorite food for many birds, and the voided seeds are widely scattered, resulting in contant new infestations.

The soft white wood of this common tree is of little use except as fuel. It gives off an unusually sweet balsamic odor when burned, and for this reason is much prized by the sentimental camper. The twigs give off an especially hot flame and pleasant smelling smoke due to the large amount of resins they contain.

Since cottonwoods grow so often in deep sandy soils, they are easily washed out by winter floods and summer cloudbursts. Often we see the numerous old logs and snags of uprooted trees floating downstream or cast up on the banks and bars to bleach in the summer sun—especially on streams of some size such as the Rio Colorado and Rio Grande. If the logs early lose their bark they do not decay rapidly nor are they readily eaten by insects. Such debarked logs make fairly good timber for use as roof supports and posts in lands devoid of more hardy trees.

Cottonwoods are the most common shade trees in many parts of Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. Only those trees which bear the male flowers should be used in propagation since they bear no "cotton." Cuttings placed in moist sandy soil take root almost immediately.

Our Mexican neighbors called all kinds of cottonwoods *alamo* (pronounced ah-lah-mo) a name whose plural *alamos* is familiar to us in several place names of towns in Texas and Mexico where the trees were once prominently grown.

///

RUG WASHERS IN THE CASHMEH ALI POOL

## • By WILLIAM E. WARNE

The author is a former administrator of this nation's Point 4 program in Iran where he obtained information for this and five previous stories in Desert Magazine. At present Mr. Warne is Director of the California State Department of Agriculture.



# The OASIS at CASHMEH ALI

"when I was traveling west from Fort Yuma, before the canals were built, there used to be dependable water at Gray's Well near the sand hills. Might call that an oasis. There used to be water at Alamo Mocho in the wash near where Holtville is today. And there's Coyote Wells near the mountains on the West Mesa."

"Ah, Gray's Well is no oasis," I protested. The others were not worth noting.

"There is water at Gray's Well," said old Mr. Benton with finality. "That is what counts."

Yes—there are many oases in the world's arid stretches—but none, I warrant, is as unique and charming as the Spring of Cashmeh Ali which "brightens and preserves the colors of Persian rugs . . ."

Teheran is an old city, near which is the even older site of Rey, dating back to Sassanian times. Rey was famed in the days of Omar Khayyam. It was captured by the forces of Genghis Khan, and today it is ruined even to its great mud wall, from which crumble the burial pots with their pitiful trinkets and fragments of bones—all that remain of a golden yesterday. The spring where rugs are washed is close by.

On the face of the great stone moun-

tain above Cashmeh Ali is a gigantic relief carving of the Sassanian era—huge figures in majestic poses. One guesses that the spring was the central feature of a royal garden, and that there once flowed from it a coursing power down to the lands below, in addition to the clean cold stream that still fills the channel and waters the fields.

Just when it was that a wily rug merchant concocted the story of the special propensities of the water of the spring, I do not know. Whether the waters are better than others when used for the purpose of washing fine carpets makes little difference now, because the rug washers have gained full possessory rights to the unique watering place, and undeniably it provides the best place to wash and dry rugs out-of-doors in all Iran, if not the world.

The spring is deep enough to submerge a great many rugs, but shallow enough for men to work in. The spring is edged by flat-topped rocks that once may have been used by princesses and ladies of the royal harem to sun themselves, but now are ideal platforms on which to spread a royal *bokhara*, a *sistan*, or a *ghashgai* for a shampoo and a rinse.

The higher reaches of the rocky slope above the spring could not be

There are watering places in all deserts, of course. An oasis 350 miles south of Algiers in the Sahara has more than a million date palms. In our own desert, several oases have become so highly developed and famous that many who visit them are unaware that once their local fame came from the water they provided. A case in point is Palm Springs, which everybody knows, even in Iran. And long before the hotel and race track were built at Agua Caliente, Baja California, that place was noted as an oasis and spa. Even before the white man came, the Indians trekked to the springs there, as they did to Palm Springs.

How many recall that Las Vegas used to be called "The Springs," or know an old-timer who still speaks thusly of this thriving Nevada city?

Oases have always interested desert dwellers. As a boy in the Imperial Valley of California I kept imagining oases with tall waving palms and deep limpid pools.

Old Mr. Benton, the prospector, set me straight. "In the desert," he said, "you're glad for any water you can find."

"Is there an oasis around here, Mr. Benton?" I had asked.

"Well," the old prospector said,

improved upon for the purpose of drying rugs. This steep slope has a southern exposure, and when the day's washing is nearly done, the whole mountainside facing the sun is plastered with rugs—like stamps of different patterns, shapes and color displayed on a card. The men then begin to roll up the dry ones, preparatory

to packing them back to Teheran. Gradually the rug-stamps are peeled off, until by evening the rocks are bare again.

The spring is open to a great guild of rug washers. Some big merchants send out cartloads in a single day. Some washers go up and down the streets soliciting individual rugs to wash. No rug, apparently, is too fine to be entrusted to the spring, for on the drying slopes the best from far and near can be seen.

Rugs in Iran are wealth, as gold or diamonds might be elsewhere. They move in and out of houses as fortunes wax and wane. In the bazaars rugs are among the most prominent displays. Many merchants will bring rugs to a prospective buyer, and leave

them for long periods without any question. Almost at a glance experts recognize rugs, and they know valuable rugs individually. There is little danger, therefore, of getting rugs mixed-up or ownership confused by scattering them helter-skelter over the face of a mountain.

Most Iranian rugs are tied, not woven, and in the old days every great family had its own factory in its village, using its own design. Tribal rugs are never perfect, but always contain faults in the design, which increase their charm. The tribes, of which there are several important ones, each have their individual type of rug. With a little practice, one can readily distinguish the tribal rugs.

There are a few of the family factories still in operation, but commercial carpet factories have for the most part taken their place. Each geographical area has its specialty, and a rug can be determined to be from Qum or Kashan or elsewhere from its appearance. To some extent, this also applies to the rugs woven on the Navajo Reservation in our own desert country—color of the wool and general pattern used by the weavers have become localized and therefore identifiable.

Many dream of the luxury of deep-napped Persian rugs, and speak facetiously of someone who lives ostentatiously as walking "ankle deep in Persian carpets;" but the Iranians prize most highly the thinnest rug with the finest knot. They like patterns, not plain spaces. Owing to the Moslem prohibition against representation of the face, designs seldom include people or animals.

New rugs are not considered as good as older ones. The latter are more pliant and somehow more comfortable to live with. For this reason, now and then a new rug will be spread before the door so that the traffic of the lane will speed-up its aging process.

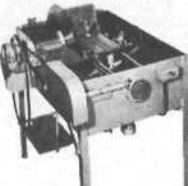
But, old or new, fine or ordinary, pleasing to the Iranian or to the foreigner, from a tribal loom or the newest factory, any Persian carpet is apt to find its way to the laundry at Cashmeh Ali if it remains around Teheran for a time. Most rugs are washed between ownership, and before great occasions a householder is apt to send its carpets to the spring for freshening.

Cashmeh Ali is an oasis extraordinary. How nice to see it again, even through so small a window as a newspaper filler. //

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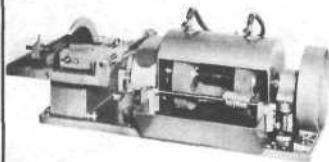
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# White Mountain Circle Tour

By LUCILE WEIGHT

*Desert Magazine's  
California Travel Correspondent*

A LITTLE KNOWN road that climbs over a major California mountain range and gives access to the oldest known living things is part of an autumn trip on which motorists will stay between four and seven thousand feet. It also takes the traveler past a unique school, through historic Indian and mining country, a remote valley of surprises, past gem and mineral areas, and includes two interesting gateways to Nevada.

This high summer route starts at 4000-foot Bigpine in Owens Valley, climbs east over the 7200-foot Westgard Pass, cuts the west edge of Nevada, and loops back to Bigpine via almost-7200-foot Montgomery Pass. There is snow in winter, but it usually causes little travel inconvenience. Westgard formerly was an obscure, questionable mountain route for the ordinary traveler, but just this past year paving was completed to Highway 95 between Goldfield and Scotty's Junction. Highway 3A from Oasis Ranch up the west-side of Fish Lake Valley to Highway 6 also is paved.

The pass name honors a pioneer in auto travel, A. L. Westgard, who started his publicizing trips in 1903, and wore out 18 cars by the time he worked his way over the route now bearing his name. This trip occurred during the laying out of a route for the Midland Trail, also called the Roosevelt National Highway. Thrilled by the breathtaking views of the Sierra Nevada as he dropped down the steep western slope of the Inyo-White mountain range, he asked the waiting Bishop delegation in Owens Valley the name of the beautiful pass. It had no name, he was told. This was remedied a year later when Westgard, with a caravan of 20 cars, drove west to east to meet a Bishop road committee at Oasis. Reaching the summit he discovered a tablet had been erected, with the name "Westgard Pass" in recognition of his "distinguished service."

After stocking up with food and a full gas tank, drive east from the north-end of Bigpine. You cross what remains of Owens River at 1.7 miles, soon pass the right branch to Waucoba and Saline Valley, then quickly start up a canyon cut into the White-Inyo range. This once was a toll-road, and remains of the tollhouse station are marked by the brilliant green of cottonwoods and willows, at 8.5 miles, making this a popular lunch or supper stop.

From here, and to about the same elevation on the east-side, if summer rain has prolonged the bloom, you may see some of the elegant desert plume and the large white thistle poppy. Also in early autumn there still may be blue gilia, lavender aster, apricot mallow, cleomella, lupine, sulfur



THE WHITE MOUNTAIN RANGE

buckwheat and, very likely, rabbitbrush. Some of the shrubs such as cliff rose and lycium bloom earlier. You may glimpse other stragglers, but late May thru July are best bets for flowers. Some beauties are several species of pentstemons and purple bird's peak. During most of this mountain passage you are in the country of ephedra-

artemisia-juniper-pinyon, and from time to time you will whiff their wonderful fragrance.

Westgard Pass is 12.9 miles from Bigpine, and just over a mile farther is a left branch

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to Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest. Whether you decide to drive the seven miles to the forest, or beyond to other pine groups, will depend upon your experience and car. This narrow twisting dirt road has high rough centers, and one visitor who had negotiated it in a new Ford pickup was very unhappy over scraping the center and having his tires "chewed to pieces." If you don't get into trouble, these pines are worthy of a pilgrimage. For many years we have been told that Sequoia redwoods were the oldest living things. If we could wait around for 2000 years or so, we may find that the redwoods really were the longest lived, for the Bristlecones are so weathered and eroded compared with the redwoods they may not survive as long as the better preserved redwoods.

While the Bristlecones were described about 100 years ago, the most ancient one, over 4600 years old, was discovered in 1957 in this area by Dr. Edmund Schulman.

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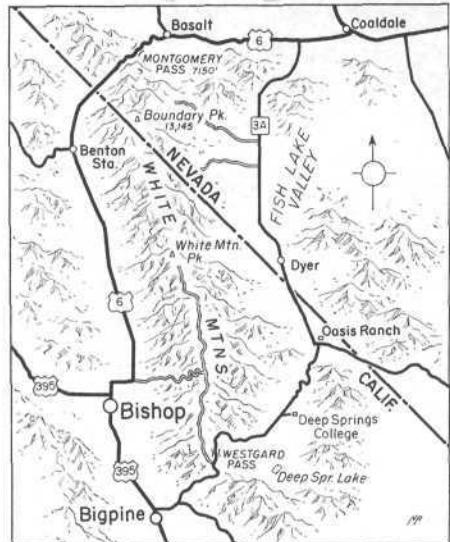
## SAGEBRUSH GEMS

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For 20 years he had been searching for "oldest" trees, to continue the work of Dr. A. E. Douglass of the University of Arizona in studying growth rings. These, when worked into a master plan of ring patterns, give clues to past climate and to age and correlation of prehistoric ruins in the Southwest. Checking on a large pine reported by Forest Ranger A. E. Noren, Dr. Schulman found it to be 1500 years old. By 1956 he and Prof. Frits Went of Caltech, had found Bristlecones 4000 years old. Finally, the oldest was found at over 10,000 feet elevation, on the California side of the state boundary. The men didn't cut down these prehistoric relics to count their rings, but took cores by use of a thread-tipped device. Bristlecones are not imposing in size but the storm-weathered ancients are awe inspiring subjects for the camera—and the imagination.

This pass area is Cedar Flats, named for the great junipers here. If your time is limited, you may decide on a cool day's outing up here, returning to the valley and a comfortable motel at night. Campers will find it invigorating at this altitude and some may decide to hike to the Bristlecone area—not forgetting cameras, lunches and canteens. But remember you are in the Inyo National Forest, so be strict in obeying fire rules.

Four miles down the east-side, you enter dark basalt narrows which match those you passed through on the west-side. Leaving Inyo National Forest, 23.45 miles from Bigpine, you also leave Payson Canyon and suddenly look down on Deep Springs Valley. To the right, a glistening white-crusted dry lake is edged with pink and marsh green. Artesian water issues at several places from the base of a vertical wall



beyond the lake. The valley, in fact, is bounded by fault scarps, which probably accounts for these springs. Don't try to drive to the springs; instead continue up the valley toward the emerald oasis of Deep Springs Ranch. Only inhabitants of the 12-mile-long valley are at the ranch and the maintenance station a mile beyond.

The ranch was an early stopping place between Owens Valley and Oasis. Before that it was Indian country, then in 1861 a party from Aurora came prospecting. This was in the early days of the Owens Valley Indian Wars. Both whites and Indians were killed in the Deep Springs area. But more miners came, Deep Springs voting precinct was established, and in 1871, 18 votes were cast here. Most of the mines were in the Antelope Spring area southwest of the ranch.

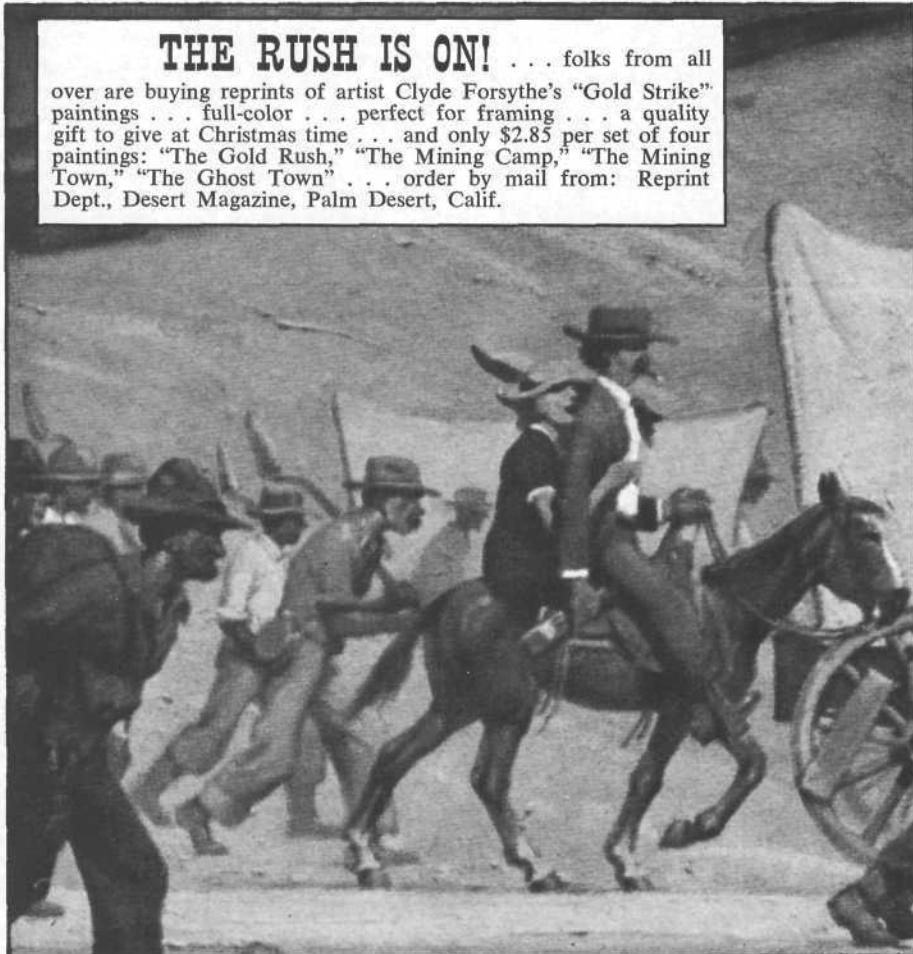
Today the surrounding green fields and towering trees are facades—not for old ranch headquarters, but for an unusual school. This is a three-year liberal arts junior college, with but 18 students and four instructors. It is operated by the Telluride Association, and the young men are chosen from those who make individual application. Regular term is September to the end of May. A summer session started July 5, 1960.

You climb out of the little valley over Gilbert Pass, 6374 feet, and soon see the green spread of Oasis Ranch, near the south-end of Fish Lake Valley. With both wells and springs, this was an important early outfitting point for prospectors, but today nearest supplies are at Mann's General Store, 16½ miles north; also, 7.7 miles north is a gas and oil sign "1 mi." Oasis is at the junction of the Bigpine-Goldfield road with Fish Lake Valley road (Hwy.3A), 45.85 miles from Bigpine. As you angle around the ranch to head north, you get the last sagey odor of artemisia, for this shrub soon is displaced by sarcobatus.

The ranch folks of Fish Lake Valley, although living in isolation, do not lack for a varied life. Besides the many facets of ranch work, some have hobbies such as painting, rock collecting and lapidary. There are hunting and fishing in the White Mountains just to the west. There is a private landing field at one of the ranches. A group of women in 1937 provided a rammed earth building which served as a center for social, civic, Sunday School and other activities. These women paid for the building by selling their needlework, con-

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ducting ice cream socials and bazaars. Reports of Fish Lake hostesses' excellent cooking have spread as they vie at get-togethers. When families put on a Christmas party for the children, folks have come over the barren miles from Deep Springs, Silver Peak, Goldpoint, Lida, Goldfield and Tonopah. Motion pictures are shown at the clubhouse or one of the ranches.

While most of the ranches are on the Nevada side of the line (the boundary is crossed 7.9 miles north of Oasis), a good many of the ranchers are from California. A dispute, started in 1952 over provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, threatened development. Between 1948-1950, 114 desert land applications were made for Fish Lake land. After water surveys were made, U.S. Bureau of Land Management rejected all but 19 of them, on 4040 acres. The lands had been withdrawn by Executive Order and were not subject to entry until they could be surveyed. Soon after the BLM clarifying statement, the survey started. One settler estimated there was enough fertile land and water for 75,000 acres to be cultivated. Irrigation is from wells. An example of the settlers' enthusiasm is the sign at Mann's store, "Dyer, pop. 18, future pop. 10,000." Tiny Dyer postoffice, by the way, is about 5 miles south of the store.

The lush alfalfa fields, vegetables and fruit trees of today are no new thing to this valley at the eastern foot of the White Mountains. State officials in 1914 were checking water potential here, as would-be settlers flocked in. Thirty locators from Sacramento came here in a single week!

And almost 100 years ago, when silver was pouring from the Candelaria hills to the north, and Columbus and Belleville mills were dropping stamps on the ore, Fish Lake produce was hauled by teams to these and other then-important Nevada towns. By 1866 over a dozen ranches here were growing hay, barley, wheat and potatoes. One of the big ranches then, as now, was Oasis, then called Cottonwood,

later the Stewart, and today the Alexis Ranch. Other old ranches are the McNett on Indian Creek, and the Molini. The Circle L, owned by E. L. Cord, is the former pioneer George Leidy Ranch. The beautiful Arlement was owned by Lois Kellogg.

Near the northern end of cultivation is the former Chiatovich Ranch, long an important social center. The family in 1906 sported a Pope-Hartford touring car, which the Smithsonian Institute offered to buy in the 1920s. An account of a spring dance given at the ranch in 1914 reveals a type of social life which today's tourist might never suspect existed here. The program included various dance exhibitions and a violin solo, "Angel's Serenade," rendered by Marco Chiatovich, accompanied by sister Lillian at the piano. Fruit punch was served in the ballroom during dancing, followed by a sumptuous midnight supper. Outstanding ball gowns included that of Mrs. A. J. Molini, in blue China silk with shadow lace peplum; Miss Ethel McNett in tango green crepe with gimlet ruffles; Miss Lillian Chiatovich in canary brocaded chartreuse with shadow lace minaret and pearl trim; Mrs. Cora Meldrum, brown striped cream satin; Miss Annette McCormick, white messaline with silk embroidered tunic; Miss Maude Williams, Copenhagen blue satin with shadow lace.

Besides silver, borax provided impetus for early Fish Lake ranching, especially when in 1875 the Pacific Coast Borax Co. moved south into the valley, northeast from the ranching area. That year what was described as "a little village of some 40 cheap buildings, chiefly adobe" were around the borax flats in the valley, with 200 people.

Cattle and sheep raising are added to today's economy — and stockmen do not take kindly to gun toters who cripple a steer or wound a lamb while deer hunting in the White Mountain range land. They have enough trouble from the predators

that come down from the heights. And rustling gets fast punishment here. One man not long ago was meted one-to-14 years in the state penitentiary.

At Fish Lake maintenance station, 12.15 miles beyond Mann's store, a branch leads into White Mountain canyons, including Trail Canyon up which mountain climbers hike to conquer Nevada's highest peak, Boundary, and Montgomery on the California side, both over 13,000 feet.

Nevada 3A now angles away from Fish Lake, and in three or four miles reaches low hills where rockhounds will enjoy an overnight camp to collect obsidianites and petrified wood — but this will take some hiking (see *Desert Magazine*, Sept. '50 and Dec. '52). Highway 6 is reached 10 miles farther west of Coaldale Junction. Turning west, first supply station is Basalt, at Hwy. 10 junction. You now start the easy climb over Montgomery Pass. You'll want to stop on the western slope for magnificent views of the White Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, with the Owens Trough between. Also note glimpses of the historic Carson & Colorado railroad grade. Then pass the California checking station, before long reach Bishop, where good accommodations are available, and arrive at Bigpine starting point 15 miles south. If you're leisured enough, and want to keep to the high elevations, drive west here to Glacier Lodge, below Palisades Glacier, and finish off the autumn High Tour with some mountain climbing in the 14,000 foot class.

October 7, 8 and 9 are dates for the unique 2nd Annual Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge—11 miles of fairway over a total distance of 28 miles between the desert town of Pioneertown and the mountain resort town of Big Bear Lake. //

## BOOKS of the SOUTHWEST

### HE SHOT THE RIGHT MAN AT THE WRONG PLACE

Legend has dealt rather unkindly with Pat Garrett, the "last great sheriff of the frontier." Garrett devoted a lifetime to enforcing the law, but his reputation was made on the night he killed Billy the Kid.

Things would have been different had Garrett dispatched Billy in the traditional Western showdown: two men facing each other alone on a dusty cow-town street at high noon; townspeople scurrying for cover; the nervous "bad man" drawing first; the calm "good guy" responding with what proves to be, after the smoke clears, the fatal volley.

Instead, Garrett ambushed Billy in a darkened bedroom. The snotty-nosed outlaw-murderer didn't have a chance.

Western author Richard O'Connor (*Bat Masterson, Wild Bill Hickok*) has written a book that takes some giant strides in the direction of a defense for Pat. It is entitled, *Pat Garrett—A Biography of the Famous Marshal and Killer of Billy the Kid*. Pat would wince at the subtitle, but the publishers obviously know how to sell books.

O'Connor does a good job separating fact

from fiction in this 286-page book. It won't reverse the unearned roles Billy and Pat have been assigned by the folk, but O'Connor had no such delusions.

*Pat Garrett* sells for \$3.95 from the *Desert Magazine Book Store*. Purchase details can be found in the footnote.

### ALL ABOUT TRAILER PARKS, MOBILE HOMES

Folks who would like to know fundamental facts about trailer parks and mobile homes will find a new paperback publication *All About Parks* interesting reading. Author of the book is Robert Nulsen, and publisher is the Trail-R-Club of America.

Containing 199 pages and profuse illustration, the book sells for \$2.75. It can be ordered through *Desert Magazine's* book department (see below).

Almost 60 pages are devoted to those interested in buying their own lot in a mobile park. Deed restrictions and other legal forms are suggested.

Books reviewed on this page can be purchased by mail from *Desert Magazine Book Store*, Palm Desert, California. Please add 15¢ for postage and handling per book. California residents also add 4% sales tax. Write for free book catalog.

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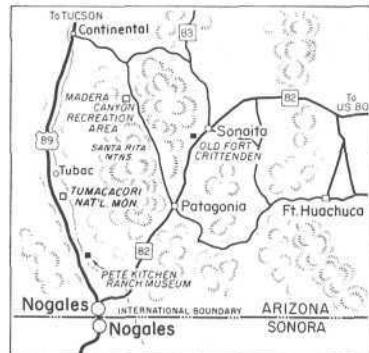
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# Nogales in October: Festive Mexican Mood

By THOMAS LESURE

Desert Magazine's Arizona Travel Correspondent



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**A** NYONE WHO has been to Nogales knows it's one of the nicest communities along the border; it's not strident and brassy like Tijuana or Juarez, but neither is it so full of *manana* as to be practically asleep. The people are friendly—seemingly more so in the autumn (and especially at fiesta time) when gaiety bubbles over, shops are filled with bargains and an increasingly better array of Mexican products (as befits Nogales' growing status as one of the foremost ports of entry), and the so-called "real Mexico" is readily seen simply by going along the back streets where the influence of the United States is surprisingly small despite its nearness.

Nogales is always good for a few hours or a few days of fun. But, with its American twin, it's also an excellent base for regional exploration—little jaunts into history, trips filled with scenic vistas, a bit of recreation. Old Mexico, of course, beckons—and you might want to run down to Magdalena or Hermosillo. But there's also plenty to keep you occupied on this side of the border.

History, quite naturally, looms large around this entry point on the Tucson, Tucson and Tumacacori road that was generally more prosaically known as El Camino Real. A few miles north, Gil Proctor has turned the old Pete Kitchen Ranch into a pioneer museum full of relics that help one conjure up the days when Apaches roamed

### SPEED DEMON

By FAUN M. SIGLER  
Sedona, Arizona

The road runner races whatever they are:  
A galloping horse or a fast-moving car.  
He challenges all. Did he have as much fun  
Before he was given this highway to run?

the land, killing, plundering and driving out all but such hardy settlers as Kitchen and his family.

A few more minutes' drive farther north on U.S. 89 brings you to Tumacacori National Monument where the partially restored mission ruins and the interesting museum reflect the efforts of Spanish and Mexican padres to tame the region. The site of Old Fort Crittenden up State 82 recalls how the U.S. Army tried to curb the Apache menace while Fort Huachuca, almost as old, remains militarily important as an electronics proving center. Huachuca also has some nice picnic spots on the military reservation.

Speaking of recreation, Pena Blanca Lake now is enticing more and more fishermen since angling at this relatively new lake

now is approaching first class qualities. The Madera Canyon Recreation Area in the Santa Rita Mountains, known for their many mines—lost and found, is a piney place for outdoor outings, too. And there are numerous other spots in Coronado National Forest—such as the Border Ghost Trail—full of outstanding scenery and fine outdoor diversions.

In short, Nogales and its surrounding region are loaded with travel possibilities, many of them off-the-beaten-path. Pay particular attention to the interlaced secondary routes threading the area, link up a few, and then start exploring. Combined with a Nogales sojourn in October, they spell freedom from boredom—a perfect situation for a mid-autumn outing.

Arizona's October calendar: Oct. 2 to Nov. 30—Meteorology exhibit at the Museum of Northern Arizona, Flagstaff; Oct. 21-23—annual Helldorado celebration at Tombstone. ///

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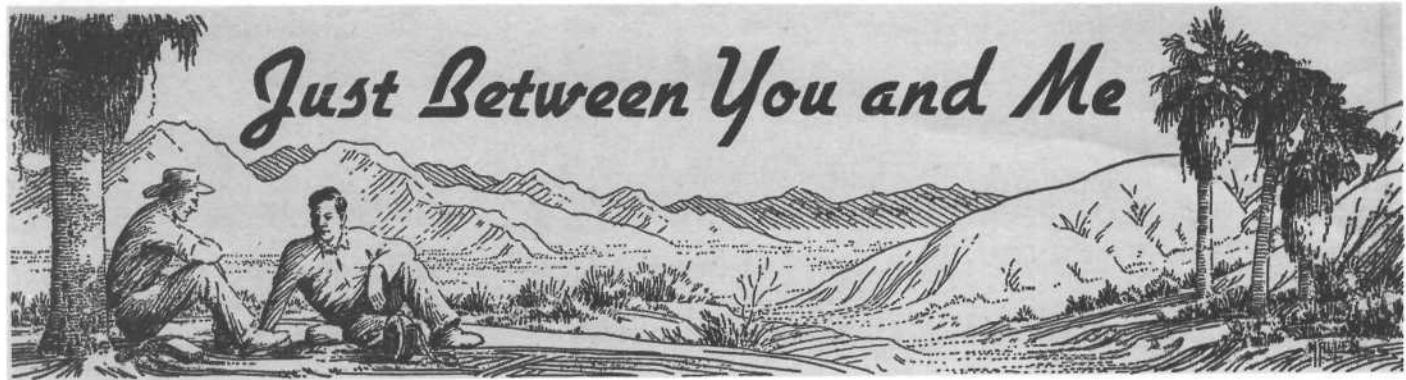
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# Just Between You and Me

By RANDALL HENDERSON

OCTOBER IS A special month on my calendar for it marks two important milestones in my desert experience. It was in October 1911, when, just out of school in Los Angeles, I came to the desert and got my first job—as axeman on the U.S. Land Office survey crew engaged in establishing the boundaries and the section corners on the Colorado River Indian reservation at Parker, Arizona. And it was 26 years later, in October 1937, when Wilson McKenney and I put the first issue of *Desert Magazine* on the press.

It was during those winter months with the surveying party along the Colorado River that I gained my first impressions of the desert—of the fascinating little-known region of strange plant life and hardy creatures which had adapted themselves to the rigors of extreme heat and little rainfall long before the human species arrived on the scene.

It was during those days spent in hewing section lines through the mesquite and arrowweed jungles of that fertile valley that I gained my first knowledge of the fine balance which nature, undisturbed by the tools of man, maintains in the complex world of God's creation.

In that primitive environment the parasitic mistletoe drew its vitality and was the most destructive enemy of its host plant, the mesquite tree. But the mistletoe was kept in check by great flocks of quail which during much of the year depended on its berry-like seeds for sustenance. The quail in turn were the main source of food for the coyotes, of which there were great numbers. If the coyotes became too numerous starvation removed the excess. Thus did natural law operate in a virgin desert wilderness.

If the world is in turmoil today and human beings in some degree have lost their sense of security, perhaps it is because man is less adept than the Creator in maintaining the balance that is necessary for survival. Where the lower species killed only for food or in the protection of the young—in other words, for perpetuation of the species—the superior animal, man, has sought to justify the destruction of life for sport, for personal aggrandizement, or for monetary profit.

While we Christians are inclined to regard the religions of the Hopi and Navajo Indians as mere superstition, I have found in their faith an element of virtue which we self-styled "civilized humans" have lost. These tribesmen have a reverent affection for the Good Earth which is the source of all life, and for the creatures which share this planet with man. They are hunters, yes, but they kill only for their own sustenance—not for sport or for profit. I am referring of course to the tribesmen as they lived when the white man first invaded this continent. While the missionaries have been teaching them some of the

white man's virtues, they also have acquired some of his vices.

When human beings toss their garbage along the landscape, when we contaminate the atmosphere and the streams with poison, when we mine the soil and pay taxes for the storage of great surpluses of food we cannot consume, and mine the rocks for metals with which to slaughter both the wildlife and other humans, I am sure we have drifted far away from the concept of beauty and natural law which the Creator designed for the universe.

\* \* \*

During its 23 years of publication I am sure the *Desert Magazine* has made a contribution to the correct spelling of words which belong essentially to the desert, and especially to the corrections of disputed place names. Most writers now spell ocotillo with two l's and three o's. And although Webster still insists on spelling one of our most common lizards "chuckwalla," the folks who live on the desert continue to spell the word as Edmund Jaeger and I agree is proper—that is, the way it is pronounced, chuckawalla.

One of the words we've tried to popularize is *bajada*. It is a pretty Spanish term pronounced "bahatha" and one for which there is no exact equivalent in English. This is the alluvial slope at the base of nearly all desert mountains. Also we have encouraged the use of the Spanish word *arroyo*. It is a prettier word than "wash" or "gully," and since writers constantly are in need of synonyms, we frequently use the Arabic word "wadi."

But there are two spelling problems we have never solved. Perhaps Navaho is proper English, but here in the Southwest where we inherited a rich vocabulary of Spanish words from the pioneers who first settled this land, we prefer Navajo. The spelling Mojave is generally preferred by Californians, but in Arizona it is officially Mohave. But since California and Arizona have more critical issues to argue about than the spelling of words you'll probably see it spelled both ways in *Desert*, according to the locale.

At the Smoki ceremonials in Prescott in August I learned that it is unpardonable to refer to the white tribesmen as Smoky Indians. They pronounce it Smokeye, and woe to any outlander who tries to change it. And if any tenderfoot ever wants to change the spelling of the Gila River to "Heela" I will take up arms in defense of the Arizonans. After all, I learned my printing trade in Arizona.

\* \* \*

From my scrapbook: "The world is now too dangerous for anything but the truth, too small for anything but brotherhood.—A. Powell Davies.

# Wildlife Photographer

A Prescott auto mechanic's masterful camera technique has won him an international reputation for excellence

By STEWART CASSIDY

**T**O MOST folks in Prescott, Arizona, lanky good-natured LeRoi Russel, an auto mechanic by trade, is known only as a good "car-fixier." Few are aware that in his after-work hours and on Sundays Russel has earned for himself an international reputation as an outstanding wildlife photographer. His work has been exhibited in photo salons throughout the world, and for the past two years he has been ranked seventh-best nature photographer in the world by The Photographic Society of America.

Russel is 46. He lives with his wife and three children in a small house just outside the Prescott city limits. It is here that his "studio" is located—an elaborate series of chicken-wire pens in the backyard built by the photographer himself.

His method of photographing wild animals is admittedly controversial. He captures the animals alive and unharmed, transfers them to one of his pens, and then proceeds to "tame" them enough so that they can be used as models. As soon as Russel gets the quality picture he is after, the animal is released.

When Russel decides an animal is ready to be photographed, he builds an appropriate setting in one of his "photography cages," the largest of which is nearly four feet high, six feet wide and 10 feet long.

Recently I had my first opportunity to watch Russel in action. He was preparing to shoot pictures of a gray fox, and the first step was to spread pine needles and cones around a large rock at the far end of the cage. Then he planted some pine branches at the sides and behind the rock. A light-blue cardboard was placed behind all of this to conceal the cage's chicken-wire back wall and to act as a neutral sky background in the photo.

Time and patience are of utmost importance in setting such a stage. Preparations often take several hours, and Russel thinks nothing of driving



LE ROI RUSSEL AND A DE-ODORIZED FRIEND

10 miles to round up "props" to make the photo as authentic as possible.

He has an arterial system of wire tunnels leading to the large photographic cage from pens where the animals are kept. With sliding doors at three-foot intervals along this passageway, it is a simple procedure to prod an animal to the main cage or back to its pen.

On the day I was with him, however, LeRoi put on a pair of heavy leather gloves and crawled into a pen where a fox was reposing. The animal greeted him with snarls and suspicious glares, but after it was secured and had been petted a few times, the animal became almost affectionate.

"Nice thing about photographing a

fox in a set-up like this is that they always head for the highest perch away from you," LeRoi said as the animal hopped from his hands into the photographic cage. Sure enough, Mr. Fox went straight for the rock and stretched out on it with tail neatly curled in front and watchful eyes surveying us.

"Go ahead and get some pictures," my host invited, "while I load my camera. Just do everything slow and the fox will stay there all day for you."

This was rare opportunity, and I shot the entire roll in five minutes. When my film was processed I was proud of every picture I took that day.

To take pictures of rodents and other small animals, he uses a boxlike cage with a glass side-panel. This panel is slightly tilted to eliminate reflections. After the scenery is arranged, two flood-lights are turned on the subject, one usually pointing down from above, the other straight at the animal through the glass wall. One or more spot-lights are also used to avoid background shadows. When the animal is in place, LeRoi snaps the picture right through the glass.

LeRoi has an outstanding collection of salon prints, most of which are covered on the back with stickers and awards received in photo contests. Yet he is never satisfied with his past accomplishments. A true perfectionist, when not engaged in photographing a new animal subject, he spends his time trying to find a better way to re-take old ones.

His equipment is far from elaborate or costly. The camera he now uses most frequently is a Minolta Autocord. His darkroom is small and kept to utmost simplicity. He likes medium-soft focus pictures, and is satisfied to use a small Federal enlarger. He deliberately underexposes his photos in order to get a "thin" negative which requires little if any dodging (reducing the intensity of a portion of a photograph by shading it during printing). Then, by using Ansco Cykora No. 3

See back cover for Russel's photo of an Arizona gray fox



and No. 4 he is able to get outstanding quality in his prints.

But, when the print is dry his work as a creative artist has only begun. He makes liberal gouges in the emulsion with a scalpel to eliminate defects (and seemingly create new ones). He is equally free with the spotting ink. When the retouching is completed, Russel is proud to say he has the worst-looking prints in the business—until a good coat of car paste has been smeared on the picture and buffed with a soft cloth. Then no trace of his doctoring remains. The finished picture is truly a thing of art.

LeRoi makes a small duplicate of each salon print and pastes it in his photo album, one to a sheet. On the page opposite go the ribbon awards and ratings the picture receives in competition.

LeRoi's unusual methods have brought expected criticism — mostly from people who spend thousands of dollars on lenses and technical equipment, and who often do not have results that would come even close to a Russel photo in a comparison. These critics claim that a wild animal should be photographed in the wild. LeRoi usually laughs this off.

"Look at it this way," he explains. "Suppose this guy hunts for an animal for two or three days and finally locates one over on the other side of a canyon some place. He slaps his huge telephoto lens on, takes his picture, and goes home and prints it. Chances are that after he makes his print he has to look in a field manual to see

THE WILDCAT IS A TEMPERAMENTAL ANIMAL, AND RUSSEL TOOK THIS PICTURE FROM OUTSIDE THE CAGE BY PASSING HIS CAMERA LENS THROUGH ENLARGED OPENING IN CAGE WALL'S WIRE SCREEN

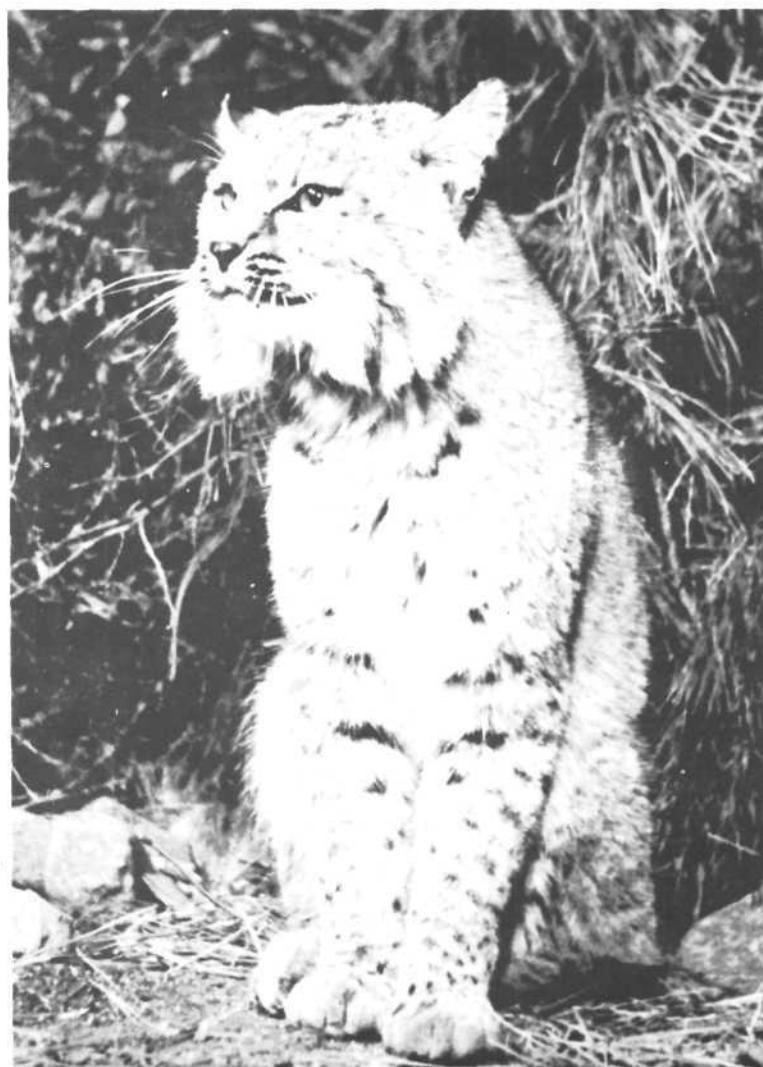
"FAWNS," SAYS PHOTOGRAPHER RUSSEL, "MAKE GOOD MODELS—AND THEY HAVE UNIVERSAL APPEAL. A PICTURE OF A BABY DEER IS USUALLY GREETED WITH A LOT OF 'OH'S' AND 'AH'S'."

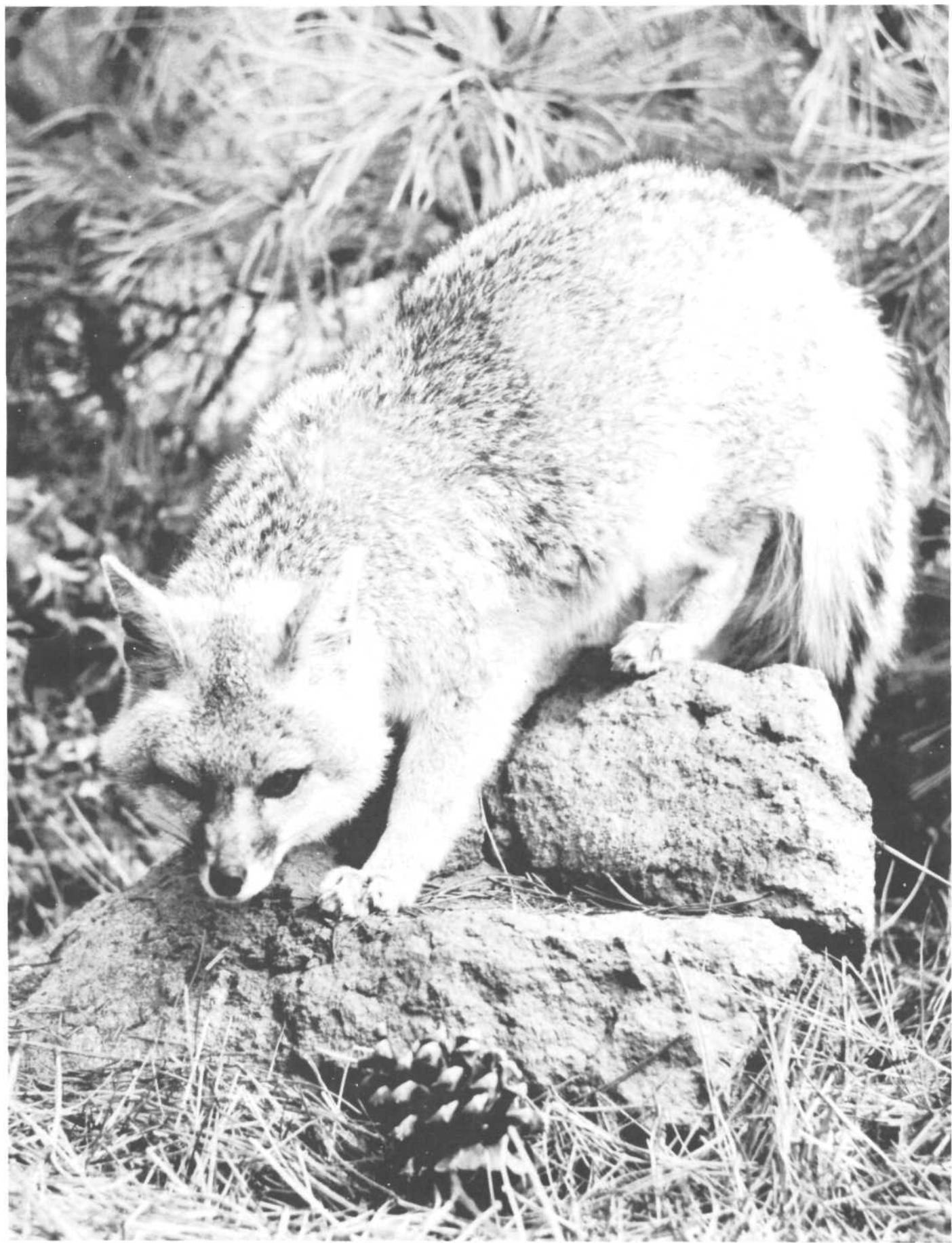
said, "can be detected by a good naturalist. And even if I could get away with it, I wouldn't try. Sometimes, though, I get a picture that's real enough, but it looks like a phony. Take that shot of a mountain lion over there, for instance. I had to scrape some of the emulsion off so his rump would be rounded instead of square, because that's the way most everyone would think it should be—at least those who will be judging the print. If I left it as it was they'd say it wasn't a live animal, so I have to keep one jump ahead."

When it was time for me to return to Tucson the next day, I dropped by the garage to say good-by to LeRoi. He rolled out on a dolly from under a car, and peering up with a grit-covered face, said, "So long, Stew, and come on up again real soon. I should have a dandy spotted skunk by then. Jack Willis caught one a few days ago, and boy, does it stink. We should have lots of fun with it."

With that, he slid under the car again, as intent on his work there as he would be in a darkroom at home.

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ARIZONA GRAY FOX. For a story on wildlife  
photographer LeRoi Russel, see preceding pages.

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